

# IMPERIAL RULE IN PUNJAB 1818-1881

J Royal Roseberry, III



In this beautifully written and fully detailed study, J. Royal Roseberry makes a major contribution to understanding the interaction of the agents of the British Raj and local leadership and elites in the nineteenth century.

In extending their power over the subcontinent the British encountered their most difficult and complex task in the Indus valley, northwest of Delhi. In playing the imperial game on this turbulent frontier they were often overmatched and outwitted by local leaders and their forces. Nowhere was the challenge greater than in Multan, a historic Muslim city, where power shifted continuously among a wavering dynasty, Hindu merchants, and tribal mercenaries.

A new factor entered the political arena in the 1840s with the arrival of representatives of the East India Company. Herbert Edwardes contested successfully with Diwan Mulraj and, through 1857, the administrative and land revenue systems of the Company were haltingly applied. As elsewhere in India, local leaders and elites sought advantages under the new system and evaded its burdens when they could.

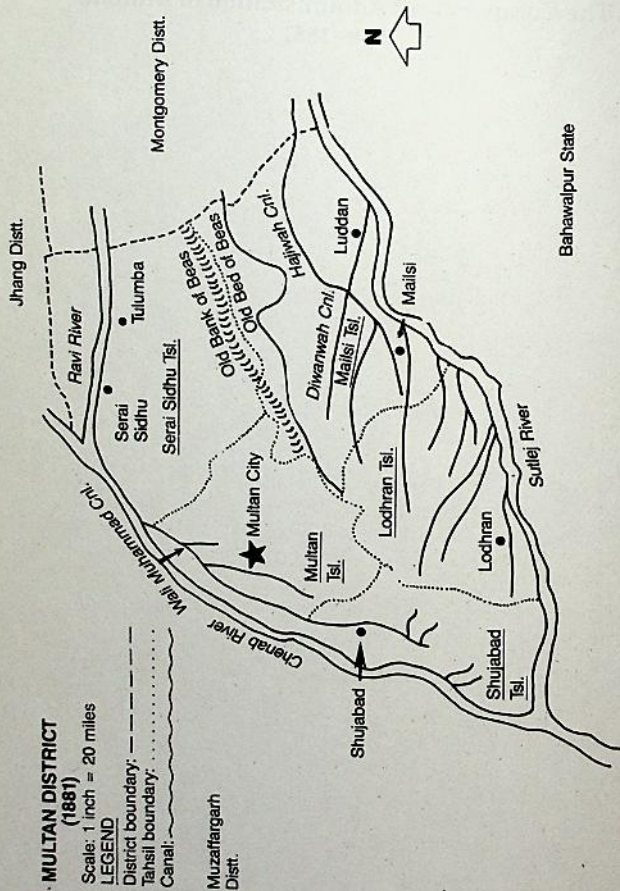
Continuing the story after the disturbances of 1857-58, Roseberry discusses the continued jostling for power among Multan's Muslims, Hindus, and British Interlopers. He devotes attention to the judicial and revenue administrations, economic growth and social dislocation, and the growing communal tensions after 1880.





**Imperial Rule in Punjab:**  
**The Conquest and Administration of Multan,**  
**1818-1881**





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**1818 - 1881**

J. Royal Roseberry, III







BE SATGURU'S TRUE GURSIKH  
BE TRUTHFUL, FAITHFUL  
BE NON-VIOLENT, TOLERANT, MERCIFUL  
BE VEGETARIAN - ORGANIC  
BE PEACE-LOVER - PEACEFUL RESPECT WORLD PEACE

"CONGRATULATIONS"  
ON BLISSFUL AUSPICIOUS PARKASH DIWAS

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This work would not have attained its present form without the contributions of my mentor at the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Robert E. Frykenberg. When I had determined on the Indus Valley as my research field and was casting about for a specific locale, it was he who suggested Multan. To meet my characteral needs over the long haul, Bob Frykenberg supplemented the professorial three R's with three P's: measured doses of Prod and Praise along with infinite Patience.

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24th July 1986

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## Introduction

The Multan or Multans to be discussed in this work will be restricted as far as possible to the roughly triangular "all but island" that comprised Multan District under the British Raj. The temporal range divides into two parts: the period 1818-1849 when the area fell under Sikh domination after a thousand years of Muslim supremacy; and, the focus will be upon the first generation of Government of India rule, 1849-1881, the shifting relationships of local elites vis-à-vis each other and the administration.

### I

For over a millennium Multan played an important role in the affairs of South Asia.<sup>2</sup> Just as Punjab constituted the north-western march of India, so Multan, athwart major trade and invasion routes between Central Asia and Hindustan, formed a march of Punjab. The west-to-east caravan track from Ghazni and Kandahar descended through passes in the Sulaiman Mountains to the Derajat lowlands, crossed the Indus, and passed Multan City en route to Upper India. In the Indus Valley, the north-south line of communications ran through Multan. Lying at the nexus of a web of land and water routes, the region possessed great commercial and strategic importance.

### II

Multan District consisted of a wedge of land between the Chenab and Sutlej rivers which met at its south-western tip. The Chenab separated Multan from Muzaffargarh District to the west while the Sutlej formed the frontier with Bahawalpur State to the south. The District bordered Montgomery District

on the east and Jhang District on the north. In 1881 the District had an area of 5880 square miles.

Multan was extremely arid. The average annual rainfall during the period 1867-1881 was six and one-half inches. Accordingly, agriculture was feasible only in the irrigable lowlands bordering rivers. The high interior of the District, known as the *bar*, was suitable for nothing save grazing. The region had been considerably more verdant in past ages when traversed by the hydra-like Ravi and Beas rivers. The Ravi, which had formerly flowed by Multan City, now merely cut across the northern corner of the District; the Beas did not touch it at all.<sup>3</sup>

Multan's heat was proverbial. In May 1869 the maximum temperature was 124 degrees Fahrenheit. In May 1874 the high was 120°F. and in May 1879 it was 115.9°F.<sup>4</sup> The torrid climate was popularly attributed to the curse of a *sufi* saint, Shams Tabrezi. According to one version of the story, while being flayed alive for heresy, Shams prayed to the Sun to punish his persecutors. Obliging, the Sun drew closer and remained there to the everlasting discomfort of Multanis.<sup>5</sup>

### III

According to the 1881 census, the population of Multan was approximately four-fifths Muslim and one-fifth Hindu (435,901 Muslims and 112,001 Hindus).<sup>6</sup> There is no indication that the proportion was significantly different under the Sikh regime. Nearly all agriculturists and menials were Muslims. Although the bulk of the Muslim population was Sunni, many prominent Sayyid and Qureshi families were Shia.<sup>7</sup>

The *Multan Gazetteer* of 1901-02 characterized local Islam as follows:

Multan, lying as it does half-way between the fanaticism of the frontier and the listlessness of the down-country districts, shows Mahomedanism perhaps at its best. Although there is little religious antagonism between the Mahomedan and Hindu in the district, and although both religions often frequent the same fairs and honour the same shrines, the Mahomedan attitude is singularly free from the semi-idolatrous practices and superstitions which characterize its more eastern developments in this country.<sup>8</sup>



The example of non-Indian Muslims such as Pathans and Baluchis had effected a relaxation of caste restrictions among the descendants of converted Hindus. The tribe had replaced the caste as the determinant of social status and the focus of loyalty.<sup>9</sup>

Jats and Rajputs made up the Muslim agricultural population. Rajputs stood higher on the social scale than Jats but both groups, being of Hindu origin, ranked considerably below Muslims of extra-Indian provenance. Consequently, Rajput tribes sometimes claimed Arab ancestry in order to enhance their standing.<sup>10</sup> Social cohesion was poorly developed among the agricultural classes. Compact village communities were rare. Instead, most cultivators clustered around wells in small hamlets that constituted little introverted islands. People of diverse tribes were mixed together for historical reasons. Numerous invasions, commencing with Mongol inroads in the thirteenth century A.D., had broken up many Jat and Rajput tribes. Subsequently, large quantities of wasteland had been brought under cultivation by contractors, who had recruited heterogeneous bands of colonists and had spotted them on the land as if shot from a shotgun.<sup>11</sup>

Small elite groups stood at the apex of Muslim society. Pathans and Baluchis composed a warrior elite and Sayyids and Qureshis formed a religious elite. These groups controlled a disproportionately large amount of land. Out of 1,375,747 acres held by Muslims at the time of the second regular settlement of Multan (1874-1880), Sayyids and Qureshis, who constituted less than 5 per cent of the Muslim populace, controlled 213,548 acres or approximately 16 per cent. Pathans and Baluchis, roughly 6 per cent of the Muslims, held 124,135 acres or approximately 9 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

The Pathan colony in Multan dated from the seventeenth century. Following the capture of Kandahar by the Persians in 1649, many pro-Mughal Pathans had decamped to Multan where they had been granted *jagirs* by Aurangzeb. Upon the break-up of the Mughal realm, Pathan *Nawabs* had seized power in Multan and had ruled until overwhelmed by the Sikhs in 1818.<sup>13</sup>

Baluchis had filtered into Lower Punjab during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries A.D. after being

expelled from Sind by rivals. Many had taken service under the Langah kings of Multan who had allotted them land. Baluchis were inferior to Pathans in power and wealth.<sup>14</sup>

Sayyids, the direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, occupied the top rung of the social ladder. Qureshis, members of the Prophet's Quresh tribe, ranked slightly lower. The steady influx of Sayyid and Qureshi families into Multan from the eleventh to the sixteenth century A.D. had won to Islam the Hindu rural population. *Pirs* (spiritual guides) wielded immense influence. Nearly all Muslims were *murids* (disciples) of *pirs* whom they supported with offerings. To be *be-pir* (pir-less) was considered shameful. A man customarily adopted his father's *pir* and retained him for life. *Pirs* periodically circulated among their *murids*, who accorded them great reverence and provided free food and transportation. *Pirs* imparted little or no religious instruction but dispensed charms and amulets as required. *Murids* did not consider themselves short-changed, for the Islam of the common people revolved around a belief in the power of holy men to grant charms for such purposes as the birth of a son or the prevention of cattle-disease. *Pirs* were venerated for miraculous powers rather than for learning.<sup>15</sup>

Most Multani Hindus were Vaishnavites, the legacy of a *bhakti* (devotional) movement in the sixteenth century A.D. A fair number were clean-shaven non-militant *Nanakpanthi* Sikhs, but few were bearded "Singhs."<sup>16</sup>

Members of the Khatri and Arora trading castes formed the bulk of the Hindu population. The Khatri immigrated from eastern Punjab during the Sikh regime at the invitation of a Khatri governor of Multan, *Diwan* Sawan Mal. Nearly all held official positions and dwelt in the large towns.<sup>17</sup> The Aroras, who were considerably more numerous than the Khatri, were indigenous to western Punjab. Although they claimed to be Khatri, the Khatri rejected the claim. Aroras ranked socially below Khatri, possibly because the low esteem in which the former were held by Muslims colored the thinking of Hindus as well. The common name for an Arora was *Kirar*, a word practically synonymous with "coward." The Aroras were so numerous that many had to find employ outside the traditional caste occupations of shopkeeper, moneylender and village accountant. In Multan they worked as goldsmiths, manufacturers of brass and copper vessels, tailors, and weavers. In addition many Aroras held land and managed it skilfully



though seldom cultivating in person.<sup>18</sup> Their holdings were concentrated around the centers of Hindu population, Multan City and the town of Shujabad.<sup>19</sup>

## IV

In Multan agriculture depended upon water from rivers, canals, and wells. As the best soil was sterile without water, land was classified by its source of water rather than soil quality. River-inundated land was known as *sailaba*, canal land as *nahri*, well land as *chahi*, and the minute amount of land dependent upon rain as *barani*. In 1881, 21 per cent of the cultivated area was *sailaba*, 65 per cent *nahri*, and 14 per cent *chahi*. These figures failed accurately to reflect the importance of wells, for well irrigation was essential even on rivers and canals during the cold season when the water-table fell. This requirement accounted for the well-oriented pattern of agricultural settlement.<sup>20</sup>

The rivers began to rise in April when Himalayan snows melted and peaked in July and August as monsoon rains fell in eastern Punjab. The canals generally ran from April through September. Canal water reached the fields either by overflow (*paggu*) or by lift by Persian wheels (*jhalars*).<sup>21</sup> A *jhalar* consisted of an endless belt of pots rotated by a vertical sprocket wheel. Bullocks treading in a circle turned the vertical wheel by means of a primitive gear mechanism. Persian wheels came in several sizes and models requiring from one to twelve bullocks to operate. When water had to be raised from a great depth, two *jhalars* were utilized. The first emptied into a reservoir from which the second drew water.<sup>22</sup> In one instance where the Sutlej was reduced to a trickle in its bed a series of artificial channels and *jhalars* conducted water across several sandbanks to the permanent river bank where it was raised to the fields.<sup>23</sup>

While used in all kinds of situations, *jhalars* were most commonly employed on wells.<sup>24</sup> Irfan Habib speculates that the application of the Persian wheel to well-irrigation caused significant socio-economic change in Medieval Punjab. Supposedly, the area under cultivation expanded considerably and the hitherto nomadic Jats settled down as agriculturists.<sup>25</sup> It is also quite possible that the importance of water to the health and wealth of the populace brought about a redirection



of religious focus. One source finds it "curious" that after centuries of devotion to the Sun God Hindus generally began to favor river worship. An analogy is drawn between Multani Hindus and Himalayan peoples who turned from Sun to *Nag* or serpent worship. The serpent is interpreted as an animistic visualization of the winding river.<sup>26</sup> Fascinating as is this theory it neglects the history of the region. In a little over a hundred years inner Multan changed its surface from a barren sun-baked *bar* with water boundaries to a grid of irrigation canals and ditches pockmarked with countless wells.

Crops requiring little moisture were raised in winter, those needing abundant water in the hot season. The leading winter (*rabi*) crop was wheat. Summer (*kharif*) staples consisted of indigo, sugar-cane, cotton, and millet (*jowar*). Indigo, the leading cash crop, was produced in large quantities for export. Sugar-cane, though the most valuable crop by weight, was only planted in a few villages near Shujabad. Most cotton was raised for home consumption.<sup>27</sup>

## V

According to a traveller's report, southern Multan harbored few large, compact villages in 1835. Every well with two or three huts was styled a village. Larger settlements served as marketing centers for clusters of hamlets. Mianpur, seventeen miles from the Sutlej, consisted of fifteen shops and fifty houses and was a headquarters for fifteen hamlets. Indigo, cotton, and turnips (the staple diet of cultivators) constituted the chief crops. The agriculturists belonged to a variety of tribes. In the vicinity of Shujabad, cotton and indigo were grown and Khattris were the principal landholders.<sup>28</sup>

The best-known reference to Multan City is the following Persian couplet:

Chuhar cheez hust, toohfujat-i-Mooltan,  
Gird, guda, gurma wa goristan.<sup>29</sup>

It translates as: "These four gifts has Multan, dust, beggars, heat, and cemeteries." There were other Multans besides the Multan of this verse. The Multan of Hsuan Tsang (seventh century A.D.) was populous, wealthy, and fertile. It boasted a golden idol of the Sun, set with rare gems, in a stately temple

ringed by tanks and flowering groves.<sup>30</sup> Another Multan felt the tread of Mahmud of Ghazni, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane (and perhaps of Alexander the Great).<sup>31</sup> More practically, yet another Multan was, since antiquity, a staging area for caravans to Khorasan (Central Asia and Afghanistan).<sup>32</sup>

Three miles east of the Chenab, Multan City stood atop a mound composed of the debris of earlier settlements. It was three miles in circumference with a population estimated at from forty to sixty thousand. The flat-roofed houses of sun-dried bricks were up to six stories in height. Dusty, narrow streets were plunged into shadow by the lofty buildings.<sup>33</sup>

A strong citadel, with forty-foot walls of burnt brick, crowned an eminence north of the town. Within its confines stood a Hindu temple dedicated to the Man-Lion (Narsingh), *avatar* of Vishnu, and the impressive tombs of two *sufi* saints of the Delhi Sultanate era, Bahawal Haq and Rukn-i-Alm. The latter's domes (sheathed with the celebrated blue and white glazed tiles of Multan) rose high above the ramparts and were visible for many miles around.<sup>34</sup>

The city was ringed by luxuriant gardens of fruit trees: dates, mangoes, oranges, citrons, and limes.<sup>35</sup> The many gardens attached to Muslim *faqirs'* shrines led one traveller to remark, "no man will quarrel with the fanaticism which has procured him shade and shelter in the climate of India."<sup>36</sup>

Silk and cotton textiles constituted the leading manufactures of Multan. Mixed silk and cotton goods were produced for Muslims who were forbidden by religious law to wear pure silk. Multan was noted for its cotton and wool carpets, patterned on models imported from Turkistan.<sup>37</sup>

From Afghanistan, Multan imported raw silk, dried fruits, and asafetida; from Amritsar, English cloth, ginger, and copperware; from Hindustan, English and Indian cloth and brass and copper pots. The city exported textiles and indigo to Afghanistan and Central Asia and textiles to Sind, Amritsar, and Hindustan.<sup>38</sup>

The foregoing paragraphs have introduced the rivals for supremacy in Multan and described the stage upon which they were to contend. The following chapters will trace their jockeyings for position under rapidly changing political and economic conditions.



## NOTES

1. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Frater Ave Atque Vale," *Poetic and Dramatic Works of Lord Tennyson* (Cambridge, 1898), p. 514.
2. Multan City was populous and flourishing when beheld by the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan Tsang during the seventh century A.D. Hsuan Tsang, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Samuel Beal trans. (Calcutta, 1958), IV, 461-63.
3. Punjab Government, *Multan District Gazetteer, 1923-24, Part A* (Lahore, 1926), pp. 1-7. W.W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* (2nd. ed.; London, 1886), x, 2-3. Punjab Government, *Multan District Gazetteer, 1883-84* (Lahore, 1884), Statistical Tables, iv.
4. *Multan Gazetteer, 1923-24, Part A*, p. 17. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, Statistical Tables, iv.
5. Edward Thornton, *A Gazetteer of the Countries Adjacent to India on the North-West; including Sinde, Afghanistan, Beloochistan, the Punjab, and the Neighboring States* (2 vols; London, 1844), II, 60-61. For another version of the Shams Tabrezi legend, see *Multan Gazetteer, 1923-24, Pt. A*, p. 288.
6. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 42; Statistical Tables, vi. In 1868 there were 360,188 Muslims and 87,009 Hindus. (Punjab Government, *Punjab Census of 1868*, Appendix 1A, pp. 4-6).
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 52-53, 55. The 1881 census showed the Muslim population to be 99 per cent Sunni but this figure was too high. Shias had been accustomed to conceal their beliefs in order to escape persecution by Sunni rulers. Many persisted in dissimulation after the need had passed. (*Multan Gazetteer, 1923-24, Pt. A*, pp. 120-21).
8. Punjab Government, *Multan Gazetteer, 1901-02* (Lahore, 1902), p. 117.
9. Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes* (Lahore, 1916), pp. 10-11, 22-23, 40.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-109. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, pp. 60-61; Statistical Tables, vii. Jats and Rajputs were of kindred stock, the social distinction between them being based upon political factors. Members of the same tribe ranked as Jats where politically subordinate and as Rajputs where dominant.
11. *Multan Gazetteer, 1901-02*, pp. 32-33. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 67.
12. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, pp. 50-51; Statistical Tables, vii.
13. Sir Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 B.C. to A.D. 1957* (London, 1958), pp. 51-55. *Multan Gazetteer, 1901-02*, pp. 49-52.
14. Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, pp. 43-45. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 60. The Multan region constituted an independent kingdom from 1443 to 1527. *Multan Gazetteer, 1923-24, Pt. A*, pp. 39-41.
15. *Multan Gazetteer, 1901-02*, pp. 36-38, 117-18.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-17.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 127. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 43. The Khatri caste produced the ten Sikh Gurus and many distinguished administrators and soldiers. In Punjab Khatri were, "so far as a more energetic race will permit them, all that Mahratta Brahmins are in the Mahratta country, besides engrossing the trade which the Mahratta Brahmins have not." (Sir George Campbell, quoted in Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, p. 247).
18. Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, pp. 250-51.
19. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, pp. 88-89.



20. *Ibid.*, p. 89. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A., p. 146.
21. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 89-90.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90. B.H. Baden-Powell, *Economic Products of the Punjab* (2 vols; Roorkee, 1868), I, 207-08. The real beauty of the *jhalar* rested in its simplicity of maintenance. The wooden gearing being of the squirrel-cage and peg type, any operator with a hand axe and a few pieces of seasoned wood could keep it in repair with little or no outside help.
23. Lieutenant F. Mackeson, "Journal of Captain C.M. Wade's Voyage from Lodiana to Mithankot by the River Satlaj, on his Mission to Lahore and Bahawalpur in 1832-33," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (March, 1837), VI, 187-88.
24. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 91.
25. Irfan Habib, "Presidential Address (Medieval Section)," *Proceedings of the Thirty First Session of the Indian History Congress, Varanasi, 1969*, (Patna, 1970), pp. 149-155. According to Habib, canal irrigation was uncommon in Medieval Punjab.
26. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, pp. 122-23.
27. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 92-100. In Sikh times the large grained Multani wheat was exported to Rajputana and Sind. (Joseph Davey Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* (Delhi, 1966), p. 2, f.n. 1. First published 1849).
28. Letter of 30 January, 1836 from Mohan Lal at Multan to Lieutenant F. Mackeson, British Agent, National Archives of India, Government of India Foreign (Political) Proceedings, Vol. for 9 May, 1836, No. 42(A).
29. Lieutenant Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara: Being the Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia; Also, Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus from the Sea to Lahore* (3 vols.; London, 1834), III, 119.
30. Hsuan Tsang, *Si-Yu-Ki*, IV, 461-63.
31. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, pp. 18-39.
32. Punjab Government, *The Land of the Five Rivers: Punjab Administration Report, 1921-22* (2 vols.; Lahore, 1923), I, 1-2, 150-52. Extract from Al-Masudi in H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians* (8 vols.; London, 1867), I, 21-23.
33. A. Burnes, *Bokhara*, III, 110-11, 114-15. Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, the Punjab & Kalat, During a Residence in Those Countries* (4 vols., London, 1844), I, 394, 396. Godfrey Thomas Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan, and of a Residence at the Court of Dost Mahomed* (London, 1843), pp. 17-18.
34. A. Burnes, *Bokhara*, III, 110-12. G.T. Vigne, *A Visit to Ghuzni*, pp. 15, 18-20. Masson, *Journeys in Balochistan*, I, 395. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 152. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A., pp. 280-81.
35. Vigne, *A Visit to Ghuzni*, p. 24. Masson, *Journeys in Balochistan*, I, 396. A. Burnes. *Bokhara*, III, 120.
36. Vigne, *A Visit to Ghuzni*, p. 15.
37. E. Thornton, *Gazetteer of the Countries Adjacent to India on the North-West*, II, 60. A. Burnes, *Bokhara*, III, 111. Vigne, *A Visit to Ghuzni*, pp. 21-22. Report of Munshi Mohan Lal, NAI, GOI Foreign (Political) Procds., 42 (A) of 9 May, 1836. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 106-09.
38. Mohan Lal, *Travels in the Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan, to Balkh*,

*Bokhara and Herat; and a Visit to Great Britain and Germany* (Patiala: Punjab Government Reprint, 1971), p. 404. First published 1846. Vigne, *A Visit to Ghuzni*, p. 21. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (2 vols.; Karachi: Oxford in Asia Historical Reprint, 1972), I, 384-86. Reprint of 1839 edition. J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 2, f.n. 1. Report of Munshi Mohan Lal, NAI, GOI Foreign (Political) Procds., 42 (A) of 9 May, 1836.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **The Legacy of Sawan Mal: Multan Administration, 1821-1844**

"Great may thy name be, Lala Sawan Mal,  
thou hast repopulated a ruined country."

—Multani ballad quoted in Sita Ram Kohli, "The Multan Outbreak and the Trial of Diwan Mul Raj," *Punjab University Historical Society Journal*, I-II (1932-33), p. 33.

At the outset of Sikh rule the future Multan District<sup>1</sup> was in a ruinous state. A remarkable governor, Diwan Sawan Mal, effected great improvements during a long reign (1821-1844). A productive but equitable revenue system was introduced; extensive measures for agricultural improvement were carried out; peace and order were restored; and equal justice was meted out to all classes. Due to these endeavors cultivation, population, and prosperity expanded substantially. Although Hindu and Sikh elements dominated the government and economy, Sawan Mal took care to conciliate the erstwhile Muslim ruling classes.

#### I

In 1818 the armies of the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh overran the Pathan-held principality of Multan in south-western Punjab.<sup>2</sup> This marked a momentous break with the past, for Multan had been a Muslim preserve since its conquest by the Arabs a millennium previously. This sprawling region, some two-fifths of the entire Land of Five Rivers, formed a strategic



bulwark against invasion from the west. Several ineffective Sikh governors came and went in rapid succession (five in a space of four years). A new era began in 1821 when Diwan Sawan Mal was appointed *Nazim* or governor by Ranjit Singh. Sawan gave such satisfaction that his charge was enlarged to include most of the later Districts of Multan, Montgomery, Jhang, Muzaffargarh, and Dera Ghazi Khan. Although required to pay a large annual tribute to the Maharaja, the *Nazim* was virtually an independent sovereign in Multan Province (as his domain was styled).<sup>3</sup>

## II

Sawan Mal faced a daunting task. When he took office, Multan was largely desolate as a result of decades of misrule and warfare.<sup>4</sup> A man of exceptional talents, the new *Nazim* proved able to restore prosperity and win the acceptance of the populace.<sup>5</sup>

Sawan Mal (1788-1844) was a Khatri of the Chopra sub-caste from Gujranwala District. He had come to Multan in 1820 as head of the provincial accounts office at a salary of 250 rupees per month. Sawan was proficient in Persian and Arabic and already possessed considerable administrative experience. As governor he displayed a tremendous capacity for hard work, a brilliant grasp of revenue matters, and a devotion to impartial justice.<sup>6</sup>

The Diwan evidently possessed the gift of inspiring respect and admiration. Several years after his demise a Multani notable informed Herbert Edwardes:<sup>7</sup> "he served Sawun Mull for three years, and sat before him in Durbar where he transacted business every day during that period, yet never heard one foolish word come out of his mouth." Possibly in response to a leading question from Edwardes, the dignitary was able to recall one bad habit of Sawan's: when a soldier offended him, he was prone to shout for the man to be stripped of sword and shield and be thrown out of the service.<sup>8</sup>

Edwardes describes an episode which may cast some light on Sawan Mal's success in governing. The *Nazim* promised a rich reward to any of his officers who brought under cultivation a certain tract of barren land. Ghulam Mustata Khan Khakwani, a Multani Pathan, took up the challenge. Yet, when

he had constructed a canal and began to turn a profit, the Diwan, "cancelled the canal-cutter's lease; and when asked for the promised reward, laughed heartily."<sup>9</sup> Sawan Mal thus defused a tense situation. As Edwardes observes in a footnote: "In the East, where public peace and quietness depends very much on the good humor of rulers, a 'hearty laugh' from the throne settles all accounts, closes every debate, and is considered to exhaust the subject under discussion. In the present instance, Sawan Mull having laughed, considered that he had in fact 'paid' Ghoolam Moostapha."<sup>10</sup> It is perhaps significant that Ghulam Mustafa Khan continued in the Diwan's service.<sup>11</sup>

### III

Sawan Mal kept power tightly concentrated in his own hands and subjected subordinate officials to minute supervision. The Diwan's administrative methods were unsystematic in the extreme. Boundaries of governmental subdivisions were vague and fluctuating. Revenue settlements varied substantially from place to place, being closely tailored to local conditions. The Nazim's unflagging energy and mastery of detail compensated, however, for this lack of regularity.<sup>12</sup>

The fundamental unit of revenue administration was the *taluqa*, eighteen of which existed within Multan District at the time of its annexation by the East India Company in 1849. A *kardar* (collector) and *munshi* (chief clerk) were stationed in each. A *kardar* received Rs. 15 to 30 per month. His accounts were periodically inspected and he was liable to be fined for extortion. The *kardar's* primary responsibility was the collection of revenue. His other duties, police and criminal justice, were derived from and secondary to the principal one. Police power was necessary to coerce reluctant revenue payers and, more generally, to maintain public peace so that agriculture might flourish. Court cases yielded additional revenue in the shape of fines. As a corollary to their revenue function, *kardars* labored feverishly to maintain and extend cultivation.<sup>13</sup> Although little is known of administration below the *taluqa* level, according to one report two Sikhs were installed in every village and hamlet to collect revenue.<sup>14</sup>



## IV

Before proceeding to examine Sawan Mal's revenue system, it will be helpful to outline the nature of agricultural settlement and land tenures in Multan. In Multan, village communities were found only in tracts flooded by rivers. Elsewhere the unit of settlement was a "well" of land, i.e. the area watered from a well. Occupants of a well—often a family group—seldom evidenced any solidarity with inhabitants of the next well. Even in the vicinity of canals the population clustered around wells which were necessary to supplement canal water.<sup>15</sup>

Two broad classes of tenures could be distinguished: superior (*zamindari*) and inferior (*chakdari*). *Zamindars* exercised overlordship (often nominal) over large tracts of land.<sup>16</sup> They had acquired their positions in various ways. Some descended from tribes that had occupied ill-defined expanses for grazing purposes. Some derived from *jagirdars* or officials under former governments, and, while losing most perquisites, had contrived to retain the right to a small grain fee. Others sprang from families of holy men whose original grants of revenue-free land had been curtailed by later rulers.<sup>17</sup>

*Zamindars* frequently introduced settlers or *chakdars* (after the *chak* or circular wooden frame upon which the brick cylinder of a well rested) to cultivate the land. *Chakdars* acknowledged the superior rights of the overlord, if only in a token manner. When a *zamindar* established settlers himself, he levied an installation fee and also a quit-rent (*haq zamindari*) of half a *ser* (one pound) per *maund* (eighty pounds) of produce. When Government planted colonists, the local *zamindar* collected the quit-rent and, if powerful enough, an installation fee.<sup>18</sup> Where no one claimed *zamindari* rights, *chakdars* held directly from government and were responsible for the revenue.<sup>19</sup>

Cultivation was often carried out by tenants. The produce left a *chakdar* after deduction of the shares of the cultivator and of the state was referred to as *kasur* (fractions). Frequently the revenue demand was so heavy as to make *kasur* hardly worth the trouble of collecting. In such cases *chakdars* were wont to empower tenants to pay government the revenue direct and to commute *kasur* to a fixed proportion of gross produce, usually two *ser*s per *maund* or one-twentieth.

Sawan Mal was a revenue farmer on a vast scale, having



contracted to pay nearly 2.2 million rupees yearly into the central treasury. Lahore Durbar accounts showed gross revenues of Multan Province to be just under thirty-five lakhs. After deduction of the sum remitted to Lahore and expenses of almost ten lakhs, a profit of 345,037 rupees remained. The actual intake may have been much greater. Under Sawan Mal the revenue demand varied between one-third gross produce in river lands and one-sixth in the dry interior, one-fourth being the mean. Generally speaking, one-third was levied on *sailab* (river-flooded) land, one-fourth on good well tracts, and one-fifth or one-seventh on poor wells. Political considerations could influence the size of the demand: the formidable Joyah Rajputs on the Sutlej paid only one-sixth for river lands.<sup>20</sup>

Four methods of collection were employed. Collection in kind was known as *jinsi*. Under *nakdi-jinsi* the revenue payer was obliged to buy back the state share at prices above the market rate. The *zabti* system consisted of cash acreage rates levied on superior crops such as indigo or sugar-cane, the revenue demand (*jama*) being ascertained by measurement of the standing crop. *Pattai* or *karari* involved issuing a lease (*patta*) for a plot of land, most often a "well" where a lump sum varying between twelve and twenty rupees was assessed. *Pattai* was much more complicated than it appeared at first glance since the lease covered not all land irrigated from the well but only twenty-five *bighas* of wheat (one *bigha* equals .5 acre) in the *rabi* (spring) harvest and five *bighas* of cotton and fifteen *bighas* of *jowar* (millet) in the *kharif* (fall) harvest. Additional cultivation was extra: 1 rupee 8 annas for wheat, 2 rupees for cotton, 1 rupee for *jowar*. Indigo, sugar-cane, and rice paid one-sixth or one-seventh of gross produce. Moreover, extra fees were levied on indigo and sugar-cane to pay the government crop watchman (*mohassil*).<sup>21</sup>

The foregoing resumé fails to capture the complexity of the revenue system. No *taluqa* or village could be found where only one type of assessment applied and all four might operate within one holding. A multitude of cesses were imposed such as: *shukrana* (thank-offering); *nazarana* (tribute); one rupee per yoke of bullocks on wells paying fixed *jama*; one paisa per *maund* for the weighman; a grazing fee of one anna per goat; a charge of four to eight annas on the washerman for drawing water from a well.<sup>22</sup>

Expansion of agricultural resources constituted a crucial adjunct of revenue administration. Major irrigation works were undertaken by the state. The colonization of waste was fostered. The authorities intervened to ensure that idle or inefficiently cultivated land was brought into full production. Cultivators received substantial assistance.

The Multan canals, though depicted by Herbert Edwardes as mainly the creation of Muslim rulers, were greatly improved by Sawan Mal. In addition to constructing a major canal, named the Diwanwah in his honor, from the Sutlej into the barren north-eastern portion of Multan District, the *Nazim* restored or extended many existing irrigation works. In all three hundred miles of channels were excavated during his administration.<sup>23</sup>

Sawan Mal promoted the colonization of wastelands by offering favorable terms of assessment to individuals who brought new land under cultivation. The former desert area watered by the Diwanwah was settled by means of such incentives. Many moneyed Hindus took out improving leases and sunk wells. One such lease was issued by Sawan's son and successor Mulraj in 1846 to a Chaudhri Mohan Lal. The annual rent on the well was set at twelve rupees exclusive of sugar and indigo, which were to pay one-seventh of the gross produce. The forced labor obligation for canal clearance would be nothing the first year and half rates thereafter.<sup>24</sup>

The Diwan refused to permit arable land to go unused or under-used. When *zamindars* allowed their holdings to lie idle, the state imported colonists to till it. Slack cultivators were liable to be replaced by more energetic ones.<sup>25</sup>

Cultivators received liberal assistance from Sawan Mal's government in the form of advances of both seed and of money for sinking wells and purchasing oxen. In addition, the *kardars* compelled Hindu moneylenders to advance cash and seed to the cultivators. The *kardars* then made sure that debtors repaid but restrained creditors from excessive exactions. When a case of debt came before a *kardar*, he struck off such proportion of the interest as seemed equitable. If the debtor happened to have some cattle worth Rs. 10 per head, the *kardar* might order the creditor to accept the kine at a valuation of twelve rupees apiece in satisfaction of the debt.



These policies resulted in a great extension of cultivation. Indigo, introduced by Pathan rulers, became the leading cash crop under Sawan Mal as a result of improved irrigation and light assessments on new indigo lands. The Sardarwah Canal alone came to yield yearly 900 to 1000 *maunds* of indigo, whereas the Pathans had realized less than 200.<sup>26</sup>

Sawan Mal's practice of assigning land to those willing and able to cultivate it, without regard for the titular overlords, drew sharp criticism from Herbert Edwardes. Edwardes, a fervent admirer of the Pathan aristocracy that suffered from Sawan's policies, declared that the Diwan, "could not tolerate a gentleman. A low-bred man himself, he hated any one who had a grandfather. Rich merchants he loved and called about him for they earned their money as he did himself; but inherited wealth he regarded as contraband, a thing to be seized and confiscated wherever found."<sup>27</sup>

Edwardes seemed to be defining a capitalist without recognizing it. As later officials discovered, Sawan Mal had the capital reserves to satisfy Ranjit Singh with regular revenue payments while collecting only a fixed proportion of the actual harvest from his cultivators. Since crops varied widely from year to year, Sawan Mal's ability to finance his operation in bad years and recoup in good years worked to everyone's advantage including his own.<sup>28</sup>

## VI

Judicial administration fell into two categories: punishment of crimes (criminal justice) and resolution of disputes (civil justice). The administration of Sawan Mal, like Indian governments in general, concerned itself mainly with the first category. Lawlessness was rife when the Diwan came to office, the pastoral tribes being given to cattle theft and brigandage. Sawan Mal dealt severely with crime and breaches of the peace. Villages to which the trail of stolen cattle led were held collectively responsible.<sup>29</sup> Cattle thieves were invariably executed. When on one occasion a local dignitary pleaded for the life of a robber, the Diwan caused the thief to be strung up in front of the man's door.<sup>30</sup>

Sawan Mal himself heard complaints and disputes in open *darbar*. The Nazim's justice was renowned for its even-



handedness. A peasant once charged that his crops had been ruined by a nobleman's horses that had been allowed to run loose. When one of the Diwan's sons, Ram Das, proved to be the guilty party, Sawan imprisoned him for several days. Ram Das' death shortly afterwards was popularly ascribed to shame. A sour note anent the *Nazim's* justice emitted from Herbert Edwardes: "Between the poor he did justice with great pains and impartiality; but a rich man, even if in the right, never got a verdict from Sawun Mull, without paying for it."<sup>31</sup> Needless to say, this hardly would have been considered a failing by the poor.

## VII

The dominant political threads of both Sawan Mal's reign and that of his son Mulraj were: (1) policy towards the Multani religious communities; and (2) relations with central authority in Lahore. These issues will be treated in depth in subsequent chapters. At this point it is sufficient to remark that Sawan, while entrusting civil administration to Hindus and encouraging Hindu business enterprise, sought to mollify Muslim elites. Pathans, who were famed warriors, were employed heavily in the provincial army. Muslim religious leaders fared less well than the Pathans. In the interests of economy, the Diwan cut back severely on grants and pensions including those to saintly families. Nevertheless, the *pirs* were left with enough of a stake in the existing order that they would think twice before rebelling or taking flight. With an acquiescent province at his back, the *Nazim* was able to keep the Sikh central government at arms length. Since Sawan Mal scrupulously remitted the revenue, Ranjit Singh deemed it expedient to turn a blind eye (like Admiral Nelson the Maharaja had but one good eye) to the Multan ruler's quasi-independence.

## VIII

Sawan Mal was shot by an assassin on 16 September 1844, dying a few days afterwards. There are two contradictory accounts of this episode. Both agree that the Diwan was shot

leaving his *darbar* by a soldier being held under arrest, but differ sharply as to the assassin's motives. The more credible version describes the gunman as a thief awaiting trial.<sup>32</sup> A somewhat melodramatic account by Herbert Edwardes depicts the murderer as a soldier of many years faithful service who had persisted in asking for his discharge. Unwilling to let him go, the *Nazim* brought trumped-up charges against the proud warrior and had him stripped of his arms in open *darbar*. Enraged by this indignity, the soldier shot Sawan Mal with a concealed pistol the guards had overlooked.<sup>33</sup>

Sawan Mal was hardly a disinterested philanthropist. Government for him was a money-making proposition. He took infinite pains, however, to gauge how much a tract of country could pay without injuring its future revenue-producing capacity. Equitable settlements, major agricultural development programs, the maintenance of public peace, and impartial administration of justice fostered prosperity and popular acceptance of the *Nazim's* rule. Whether these policies were motivated by concern for the public good or enlightened self-interest is besides the point.

Nearly every segment of the population gained from Sawan Mal's administration. Hindus controlled the government and expanded their landholdings. At the same time Muslim peasants benefited from light assessments and agricultural improvements. Pathans received military employment commensurate with their talents. The one class that reaped no advantage seemed to be the Muslim religious leaders, who beheld an infidel government in control of Multan's hallowed shrines. More mundanely, governmental support for those shrines and their custodians was greatly reduced.

Sawan Mal bequeathed his son a personal fortune estimated at over ten million rupees. His most enduring legacy, however, was an imposing reputation in local memory. In 1876, after a quarter-century of British rule, an official noted that the Diwan's renown as a great and good ruler was increasing in the districts around Multan. "Mahomedans as well as Hindus speak of him with exaggerated respect."<sup>34</sup>



## NOTES

1. in the interests of clarity the names of British administrative divisions are applied in this work to corresponding areas in pre-colonial times.
2. The Pathan Nawabs ruled slightly less than half of later Multan District from their capital at Multan City. The eastern or Sutlej side of the District belonged to the Nawabs of Bahawalpur, a powerful state east of the Sutlej.
3. Sita Ram Kohli, "The Multan Outbreak and the Trial of Diwan Mul Raj," *Punjab University Historical Society Journal* (I-II, 1932-33), pp. 32-33. Gulshan Rai, "The Mughal Province of Multan and its Subsequent History," *Ibid.*, (I-II, 1932-33) pp. 70-71. Sir Lepel Griffin and C.F. Massey, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families in the Lahore and Rawalpindi Divisions of the Punjab* (2 vols., Lahore, 1890), II, 157.
4. The Multani Pathans, though stout-hearted warriors, were indifferent administrators. In addition, from the 1770's onwards Multan was ravaged repeatedly by the Sikhs.
5. After a half-century of British rule, Edward Maclagan, who served as both Settlement Officer and Deputy Commissioner of Multan, concluded that the common people probably were more contented under Sawan Mal than ever before or since. Edward Maclagan, *Multan Gazetteer*, [1901-02 (Lahore, 1902), pp. 52-53.
6. *Punjab Chiefs*, II, 154-56. Sita Ram Kohli, "Trial of Mul Raj," p. 32.
7. Herbert B. Edwardes (1819-1868). Political officer in Punjab under the Residency, 1846-49; prominent actor in the Multan campaign, 1848-49; civil administrator in Punjab after Annexation; Commissioner of Peshawar during the 1857 revolt.
8. Major Herbert B. Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier in 1848-49* (2 vols., Lahore: Pakistan Government Reprint, 1964), II, 25-27.
9. *Year on the Frontier*, II, 12-13.
10. *Ibid.*, II, 13. For an instance in which Edwardes employed humor to ease a tense confrontation with a Waziri Pathan chief, see *Punjab Government, Political Diaries of Lieut. H.B. Edwardes, Assistant to the Resident at Lahore, 1847-1849* (Allahabad, 1911), p. 51.
11. As related by Edwardes the canal lease story is discreditable to Sawan Mal. Edwardes notes that the Hindus of Multan told the story as a joke on Ghulam Mustapha without realizing that it reflected upon them. Perhaps the Englishman missed out on some cultural nuances.
12. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, pp. 52-53.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 277. Sir James M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual* (5th ed., Lahore, 1961), p. 22. Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, *The Land of the Five Rivers: An Economic History of the Punjab from the Earliest Times to the Year of Grace 1890* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), pp. 178-79.
14. Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, the Punjab, and Kalat, During a Residence in those Countries* (4 vols., London, 1844) I, 398.
15. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, (Lahore, 1884), p. 67. *Punjab Settlement Manual*, p. 81.
16. *Punjab Settlement Manual*, p. 82.



17. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
18. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 68-69.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-24.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-25.
23. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, pp. 51-52. *Punjab Settlement Manual*, p. 22. *Punjab Chiefs*, II, 156.
24. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, p. 53. *Ibid.*, Appendix to Chapter V, pp. 386-87.
25. *Punjab Settlement Manual*, p. 22. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 70. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02 p. 53.
26. "Memo on the cultivation and manufacture of indigo in the Mooltan District written at the time of the 1st Regular Settlement by Mr. Morris, Settlement Officer," Appendix A to *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 165.
27. *Edwardes*, II, 25.
28. *Punjab Government, Muzaffargarh District Gazetteer*, Part A, p. 240.
29. *Montgomery Settlement Report*, p. 38.
30. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, p. 277.
31. *Year on the Frontier*, II, 25.
32. G.L. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab* (2 vols; Lahore, 1940), II, 98.
33. Edwardes' attitudes towards Sawan Mal's son Mulraj, his adversary in 1848-49, appear to have colored his view of Mulraj's predecessor. Edwardes' usual tactic was to label Mulraj an unworthy son of a great father, probably because Sawan Mal's reputation was too strongly established to assail openly. From time to time, however, Edwardes let drop backhanded aspersions against Sawan's character and motivations.
34. J.B. Lyall, Settlement Commissioner, Multan and Derajat Divisions, to Secretary, Punjab Government, 16 December 1876, National Archives of India, Government of India Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue) Proceedings, No. 11(B) of October 1882.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Diwan Mulraj and the East India Company, 1844-1848: A Study in Destabilization

"He [Mulraj] was very strong on this point, distinctly stating he would hold office if I did not interfere. I said I could not make any absolute promise, would not hear petty or frivolous cases, but in matters of great importance I must interfere; that we could not have any *Nazim* in the country who was not subordinate to the Government."—Testimony of John Lawrence, Sita Ram Kohli, *Trial of Mul Raj*, p. 171.

Upon Sawan Mal's assassination in September 1844, his son Diwan Mulraj succeeded to the governorship of Multan. With the job went many headaches such as a tribe of fractious relatives (including a formidable mother); enemies at the Sikh court; and restive subjects. All of these the new *Nazim* might have overcome if his authority had not been eroded by the activities of a dynamic new force on the Punjab scene, the British East India Company. Having secured a dominant voice in the affairs of the Sikh Kingdom as a result of the First Anglo-Sikh War, the Company set out to remodel Punjab in accordance with Western norms of efficiency, justice, and humanity. Remote Multan Province, hitherto left much to itself, could not escape this campaign. Customs and revenue reforms in the rest of the kingdom inspired Mulraj's subjects to agitate for similar boons. Still more damaging to the Diwan's pride and power, the central government asserted a right to hear complaints against his internal administration.

The pressures to which Multan was subjected were part of a general effort to centralize power in Lahore. From a British viewpoint, Mulraj was as accountable for his actions as any other provincial governor. The British failed, however, to



appreciate that Multan and its trans-Indus dependencies comprised an exposed frontier of Punjab. South-west Punjab was easier to administer and defend from Multan City than from Lahore, a reality which Maharaja Ranjit Singh had recognized by allowing Diwan Sawan Mal free rein so long as the latter rendered nominal allegiance and revenue on schedule. In striving to make Multan march in step with the rest of the country, the British antagonized not merely Mulraj but also elements of a Multani power structure whose interests were bound up with provincial autonomy. Thus Mulraj's resignation under pressure created a power vacuum in south-western Punjab that was to have convulsive consequences for the entire Land of Five Rivers.

# I

Having lived all his life in the shadow of a masterful father, the new *Nazim* was generally regarded as a cipher. Mulraj proceeded nonetheless to display considerable resolution and capacity. His first test came in November 1844 when the Sikh portion of the provincial army, apparently instigated by his enemies in the Sikh Durbar, mutinied for higher pay. Without hesitation Mulraj and his younger brother Karam Narayan mobilized the Pathan troops and fell on the mutineers. After suffering heavy casualties the Sikhs sued for peace.<sup>1</sup> In 1845 the Kharrals and Fatianas, turbulent nomad tribes along the Ravi in Montgomery District, deemed it safe to rebel while the country was in confusion from the First Sikh War. Mulraj crushed this insurrection with the aid of Karam Narayan and a veteran Pathan officer, Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai.<sup>2</sup> The *Nazim* could well have enjoyed a long and successful reign had not a new and explosive ingredient been injected into the Punjabi body politic.

After defeating the *Khalsa* army in the First Sikh War (1845-46), the East India Company considered it inexpedient to swallow the Punjab in one gulp. Having shorn the Sikh Kingdom of the Jullundur Doab and Kashmir, the Company endeavored to govern the rump (known as the Lahore State) indirectly through a subservient Durbar.<sup>3</sup>

Control was to be exercised by a British Political Agent at Lahore. Although the Government of India disclaimed any



intent to interfere in internal affairs of the kingdom, the advice and good offices of the Governor-General were to be available upon request. This proffered assistance provided an entering wedge for interference, since dissatisfied elements were certain to solicit mediation. The British agent was charged with the task of reducing the huge and unruly *Khalsa* army to 12,000 horse and 20,000 foot, as required by the peace treaty, and restoring discipline. A British garrison would remain at Lahore until the close of 1846 to maintain order while the Punjabi army was being pruned and brought to heel.<sup>4</sup>

Mulraj had no reason to fear a British presence at Lahore, for he had established friendly relations with a Company's representative prior to the recent war. In March 1845, the *Nazim*, at odds with the Durbar, sought advice from Major Broadfoot, the hawkish Political Agent for the North-West Frontier on a course of action should troops from Lahore march on Multan. Broadfoot evidently kept in communication with the Diwan, for on the eve of war (November 1845) he assured the commander in northern Sind that Mulraj would defend Sind with Multani troops against the Lahore forces, "thus leading to the belief that he had succeeded in detaching the Governor from his allegiance to Lahore."<sup>5</sup> Although Mulraj's willingness to fight for the British was not put to the test, he gave no aid to the *Khalsa*.<sup>6</sup>

Mulraj was soon undeceived about the aims of the *feringis*. Though prepared to intrigue with a provincial governor in order to weaken the Sikhs, they took a different line as *de facto* rulers of Punjab. The Diwan had a long-standing dispute with the Lahore Durbar over arrears of tribute and non-payment of a succession fee. *Wazir Lal Singh*, an enemy of Mulraj, used the Durbar's claims as a pretext for despatching troops against Multan, but Mulraj's Multani Pathans threw back the advance guard.<sup>7</sup> Realizing that in the long run the odds were against him, the *Nazim*, having sought and obtained British mediation, came to Lahore in October 1846 for talks with the Durbar. Through the offices of John Lawrence, Acting Political Agent, a settlement was reached by which the Diwan ceded Jhang District and accepted an enhanced assessment on his remaining territories. In return his contract to farm the revenues was renewed for three years.<sup>8</sup>

Although John Lawrence depicted Mulraj as grateful for British mediation, the latter's remarks as recorded by

Lawrence indicated dissatisfaction and nervousness. The Diwan was disappointed that the British declined to assist him in keeping his territories intact. Nor did he feel that the new overlords protected him adequately against Durbar foes. Upon soliciting John Lawrence's signature on the agreement with the Durbar in order to give it added force, he was told that the British representative could sign only as witness, not as guarantor, and then only if both parties assented. Since Lal Singh demurred, Lawrence did not sign at all, explaining "that the British officers were here as mediators and not Masters and therefore ought to do nothing but with the consent of both parties." Mulraj also regretted that the British did not help him obtain a contract for seven years, at the end of which the boy Maharaja Dulip Singh would have come of age. When the three-year lease was up, the Diwan's British protectors would have withdrawn and Lal Singh would still control the government.<sup>9</sup>

Mulraj's first encounter with the new masters of Punjab ended disappointingly with his requests for assistance refused on the unconvincing grounds of British powerlessness. Furthermore, the Officiating Political Agent formed an unfavorable opinion of Mulraj. According to John Lawrence, the Diwan was well-mannered but displayed no signs of boldness or cleverness and seemed uninformed about the outside world. Anent the Diwan's family difficulties, Lawrence remarked: "Like every family in India who have anything to quarrel about, they are divided among themselves."<sup>10</sup> Since John Lawrence was notoriously blunt, it is quite possible that he did not conceal his feelings from Mulraj. What the Diwan thought of John Lawrence is not recorded but his subsequent eagerness to deal with Henry Lawrence instead might be considered significant.

The foregoing events revealed an interplay among three forces: Mulraj, the British, and the Durbar. Although the Punjabi nobility had accepted British hegemony, they still retained some freedom of action. Individuals and factions attempted to use the newcomers to aggrandize themselves and pay off old scores. In fact the British stepped into a role once filled by Ranjit Singh as the pole star of authority around which many constellations of power revolved. By judicious dispensal of rewards and punishments, Ranjit had ensured that contending groups had more to gain from his continuance



in power than his fall.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, in the dispute between the Multan *Nazim* and the Durbar the British put both parties in their debt by acting as the honest broker. Indeed the possibility cannot be excluded that the Company, by permitting the Durbar to send troops against Multan, set up a confrontation that would impel both contestants to seek its intervention. The British, however, differed from the late Maharaja in having command of vast outside resources. If the circuitous game of playing one faction against another grew tiresome they could—and ultimately did—take direct control of the state.

## II

The Treaty of Bhairowal in December 1846 tightened the Company's grip on Punjab. Since Henry Lawrence, the Political Agent, lacked power to institute needed reforms, the Indian Government employed the imminent withdrawal of its garrison as a lever to extract further concessions. This tactic succeeded because the Durbar desperately needed a British military presence to counter-balance the unruly *Khalsa* army.<sup>12</sup> The Bhairowal agreement provided for a "British officer, with an efficient establishment of assistants . . . , which officer shall have full authority to direct and control all matters in every department of the state." A British contingent was to remain at Lahore at cost to the Durbar of Rs. 2.2 million annually. The treaty would expire when Dulip Singh came of age at sixteen in 1854.<sup>13</sup> Henry Lawrence assumed the office of Resident, while continuing to serve as Agent to the Governor-General for the North-West Frontier.<sup>14</sup>

Effects of the new arrangement were soon felt in Multan. Bent on transforming all Punjab, the British could not but be irritated by Mulraj's pretensions to independence. John Lawrence fulminated that the *Nazim* had "so long enjoyed sovereign power in Multan that he forgets the duties of a subject, and when he dares not openly refuse obedience, delays, and hesitates to comply."<sup>15</sup> Herbert Edwardes waxed indignant that "to all intents and purposes, Mooltan is a separate kingdom, everyone of whose interests seem to lie in thwarting those of the surrounding districts." Edwardes' ire was occasioned by the obduracy of Peyrah Mal, one of Mulraj's *kardars*. When ordered by the Englishman to ship treasure across the Indus to



pay Lahore troops in Bannu District, Peyrah declared that if the Durbar wanted the specie it would have to send somebody over to pick it up. The *kardar* also ignored a second, peremptory command from Edwardes on the ground that Mulraj alone was his master. At this the political officer had him seized and sent to Lahore under guard.<sup>16</sup>

The vehement indignation Englishmen displayed at Mulraj's independence is only intelligible in light of the prevailing attitude towards indigenous institutions during the 1840s. In earlier times the tendency had been to interfere as little as possible. Then local communities under European sway were left alone so long as they remained obedient subjects and paid the revenue. In the case of princely states, only a menace to British security was held to merit intervention. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the threshold of tolerance grew lower as convictions of Western superiority in all areas increased. This shift in attitude expressed itself within British India in assaults on *sati*, *thagi*, and infanticide. Where princely states were concerned, gross oppression and later mere slovenly administration, came to be regarded as fit grounds for intervention.<sup>17</sup> This altered perspective on things Indian only mirrored changes in the climate of opinion in England. During the Victorian era many practices once quite tolerable were in the process of becoming intolerable under pressure from religious and social reformers.<sup>18</sup> By the time Punjab fell under the Crown's suzerainty, enthusiasm for material progress and Evangelical Christianity was at flood tide. The British could probably have achieved their minimum goal of a stable and subservient buffer state, but the dominant *zeitgeist* drove them to institute fundamental reforms that generated a violent backlash.<sup>19</sup>

From Mulraj's point of view the *sahibs* were intruding in his internal affairs. His displeasure manifested itself when one of the Resident's Assistants, John Nicholson, appeared at Multan on an inspection tour in April 1847. Only two of the Diwan's officials turned out to greet Nicholson, a snub which elicited some pointed remarks from the Assistant. The *Nazim*'s misgivings as to what this visit portended were borne out when Nicholson demanded surrender of some Multani *sowars* who had slain a villager in a retaliatory gesture. Mulraj complied tardily and with ill-grace.<sup>20</sup> Later he was ordered in the name of the Durbar to abolish *sati*, female infanticide, and forced

labor. When the Diwan replied in August 1847 that he had already abolished the first two and that forced labor was unknown in Multan, the Durbar complimented Mulraj for good management and obedience to the Sirkar's orders.<sup>21</sup>

A centralized style administration in Punjab proper could not coexist with Mulraj's system without friction. Custom duties constituted a major bone of contention. In accordance with free trade principles, Government eliminated duties on many items and substituted consolidated customs lines at frontiers for multifarious town and transit duties.<sup>22</sup> Although Multan was exempt from the new arrangements, local businessmen pressured the Diwan to follow suit, while foreign merchants shunned the Multan route.<sup>23</sup> Decreased land revenue assessments in territories under the Durbar also injured Mulraj by enticing away cultivators.<sup>24</sup>

Mulraj counter-attacked on the customs front by utilizing differences between his system and Lahore's to induce caravans to come by way of Multan. Since Multani customs continued to be collected in instalments along the way, duties were considerably lower at the border of Multan than at the Lahore State frontier where customs for the whole country were collected in a lump sum. The Diwan set up new customs posts that could be reached directly from Afghanistan without passing through Lahore territory. Then he publicized the fact that Afghan merchants, after paying Multan border dues and crossing the Indus, could immediately enter Durbar territory from the Multan side where there was no customs line, thus evading internal Multan tolls and the entire Lahore customs. These tactics were so damaging to the Durbar's customs revenues that in October 1847, it commanded the Multan *Nazim* to adopt the new scale of customs duties and close unauthorized customs houses.<sup>25</sup> Mulraj took no notice of the order, possibly because the terms under which he farmed the revenue of Multan did not allow the Durbar to dictate customs policy.

When the Resident lowered duties at Isa Kheyl ferry, Mulraj devised an ingenious stratagem. In March 1848, Herbert Edwardes discovered an emissary of the Diwan persuading Afghan merchants to turn aside to a newly-opened Multani ferry at Dubblee. The agent, who had been promised a raise in event of success, made effective use of forged *Sirkari parwanas* that denounced the imposters who had lowered the duties at Isa Kheyl and threatened all crossing there with severe



chastisement. Edwardes countered by sending officers to all Multan ferries in order to collect the Durbar share of the customs. In the case of a consignment of goods that would pay Rs. 10 to Lahore or Rs. 8 in Multan (two at the Indus ferry, one at Leia just east of the river, and five at Multan City), Edwardes' man would take the two rupees difference between Lahore and Multan rates. This measure removed the incentive to use the Multan route without directly interfering with the Diwan's arrangements.<sup>26</sup>

The customs war between Lahore and Multan raised the question of whether, from an Indian viewpoint, the new system was necessarily preferable. Edwardes' mention of goods that would pay Rs. 8 to Mulraj as against Rs. 10 to the Durbar revealed that on some items old duties were less. It is of interest that salt merchants transferred operations from Lahore State to Jullundur Doab and Multan because under the new customs rules salt duties were higher and collected in cash.<sup>27</sup>

The main point at issue between Mulraj and the British was whether the central government could review and reverse his actions. This cleavage portended a direct clash between the Diwan's assertions of autonomy and the claim that he was just another subject of the Lahore state. In May 1847, arbitrators nominated by both parties investigated a claim by Mulraj against one Dya Ram for Rs. 250,000 and found the Diwan entitled to only Rs. 9,000.<sup>28</sup> If, as is likely, the Resident persuaded the contestants to submit to arbitration, this was the first of several rulings adverse to Mulraj for which the British were responsible. Somewhat later (the precise date is not given) the *Nazim* incarcerated a family of bankers, alleging that their firm at Multan had gone bankrupt owing him large sums. A representation by the prisoners brought a summary investigation by an Assistant to the Resident, who found in favor of Mulraj. The bankers next appealed to the Governor-General, who referred the matter to Acting Resident John Lawrence. Having studied a complex mass of account books submitted in evidence, Lawrence induced the disputants to be found by verdict of a Lahore *panchayat* selected by themselves. After going over the books in presence of the Acting Resident, the panel disallowed Mulraj's claim to some Rs. 500,000. Although ill-pleased, the Diwan liberated the prisoners. In the same period a suit by some Muslim soldiers for arrears of pay was decided against Mulraj.<sup>29</sup> In July 1847 the Durbar, presumably



in response to a complaint, reprimanded the Diwan for allowing his *kardars* to sell the property of Khudai Khan Girangwala, who had fled to Bahawalpur. He was enjoined to recall the refugee and induce him to remain by restoring his property.<sup>30</sup> Mulraj became convinced "that any one might appeal against him, and he would be obliged to show cause for what he had done."<sup>31</sup> In August 1847 the Durbar subjected the Diwan's judicial proceedings to scrutiny. He was instructed to summon plaintiffs and defendants in all cases, take their depositions and testimony of witnesses, and forward the record together with his opinion to Lahore for final resolution.<sup>32</sup>

Pressures on the Multan governor formed part of a general tightening-up process. Administrative reforms began under Henry Lawrence, but the tempo accelerated after John Lawrence took over from his ailing brother in August 1847.<sup>33</sup> Since the presence of John rather than Henry at Lahore at a crucial time affected the destinies of Mulraj and Multan, some mention of the brothers' differences is germane. Although agreed on need for substantial reform, they differed sharply about the pace and the consideration due those adversely affected by the process. Well aware of the deficiencies of Sikh administration, Henry declared that native officials, "from the highest to the lowest, regard office only for what is to be obtained by it; and consider the people as just so many cows to be milked." The Resident believed, however, that Punjabi officials were salvageable, attributing their shortcomings to environment. He planned to promote honesty by adequate salaries and bestowal of honors, while deterring misbehavior by threat of disgrace and punishment.<sup>34</sup>

With respect to a difficulty in getting accounts out of the Durbar, the Resident observed that procrastination could be expected in men who had been accustomed to Ranjit Singh "conquering a hundred villages one day, and giving them away *viva voce* the next; keeping neither a record of the fact, nor granting a sunnud for the gift."<sup>35</sup> Readiness to give members of the old regime the benefit of a doubt set Henry apart from John, who viewed them as so many parasites to be swept away. The Acting Resident operated on the premise that British supremacy necessitated "gradually reducing the power and consequence of the chiefs of a country, and even when we grant them their *jagheers* for life, we curtail their power, by obliging to submit to rules and systems those who have never

hitherto recognized any law but their own will and pleasure."<sup>36</sup>

By pushing through reforms without heed for political repercussions, the Acting Resident antagonized vested interests throughout the kingdom. The streamlining of the administration of the Bari Doab exemplified John Lawrence's vigorous methods. Nineteen *kardar*'s districts were consolidated into six. Twenty forts were dismantled and their garrisons were discharged. These economies were estimated to have saved the government at least Rs. 20,000. John Lawrence argued that substantial savings could be effected in outlay on *jagirs* and cash pensions because Rs. 552,577 of Bari Doab revenues were alienated in *jagirs* and Rs. 166,463 were tied up in cash pensions.<sup>37</sup> These proceedings proved politically unwise because the Sikh community was concentrated in the Bari Doab or Manjha, which already teemed with *Khalsa* soldiers disbanded in accordance with the peace treaty. The addition of 13 *kardars* and their retainues, together with garrisons from 20 forts, dangerously swelled the ranks of the disgruntled unemployed. Not surprisingly, when the Multan insurrection broke out, recruits from the Manjha swelled the ranks of Mulraj's forces. The proposal to reduce *jagirs* and pensions was also inopportune because the British were not in complete control of the country and the threatened classes still wielded considerable power. The Acting Resident's policies in Punjab proper can hardly have passed unnoticed in Multan. Local civil and military establishments were given a preview of their probable fate should Multan come under the Durbar.

Centralizing trends encountered the stiffest opposition in Multan. The traditional autonomy of the region was a function of its frontier location. Multan's geographical position had exposed it to repeated invasions from Sind and Afghanistan. Moreover, climatic and topographical factors rendered south-western Punjab especially permeable to trans-frontier elements. The prairies of Multan and neighboring Sind resembled Central Asian steppes, while differing markedly from areas of rain-watered agriculture in eastern Punjab and Hindustan. Thus, successive waves of nomadic invaders found it easy to gain footholds in the vicinity of Multan. As a result of migration and conversion, Multani pastoralists were exclusively Muslim. With belts of irrigated agriculture along rivers and a hinterland tenanted by roving tribes, Multan Province



constituted a steppe frontier of the kind described by William H. McNeil in *The Rise of the West* as occurring where sedentary agricultural civilization confronts nomadic pastoral society.<sup>38</sup> Another such frontier had inspired Omar Khayyam to write:

With me along the strip of Herbage strown  
That just divides the desert from the sown.<sup>39</sup>

Steppe frontiers contrasted with the American settlement frontier discussed by Frederick Jackson Turner<sup>40</sup> in that pastoralists enjoyed a military edge over wealthier and more numerous settled folk. Rigors of nomadic life and mastery of cavalry tactics made steppe peoples formidable far beyond their numbers. Rulers of Multan faced a two-fold task: first, protecting the frontier against invasion; and, second, maintaining control over a shifting, turbulent population within the borders. Experience had proved that this mission could best be accomplished by a strong authority based in the province. Whenever Multan formed part of a larger political system, the central government had found it expedient to confer the governorship on a strong man and allow him free rein.

Ranjit Singh's actions had indicated an understanding that Multan could be governed most effectively from Multan. The Maharaja allowed Sawan Mal a free hand so long as the revenue was paid. The Diwan was permitted to keep up a strong army, composed principally of Multanis, to defend the frontiers and maintain internal security. Sawan Mal proved an able warden of the marches, repelling Baluch assaults on the Trans-Indus Frontier and keeping order among Muslim grazing tribes east of the Indus. In 1833 the Diwan turned back an invasion by the Gurchani, Lishari, Laghari, and Khosa Baluchis.<sup>41</sup> In 1836 when he routed the Mazari Baluchis and took possession of Rohjan, Ranjit Singh exclaimed: "Sawan Mal could wield pen and sword equally well and it was, therefore, a matter of great credit to him."<sup>42</sup> In 1837-38 the Mazaris under their chief, Bahram Khan, attempted to regain Rohjan, but the Diwan drove them back into the hills.<sup>43</sup> Another Mazari descent upon Rohjan was thwarted in 1842.<sup>44</sup> Jat and Rajput pastoral tribes of Cis-Indus Multan, though not as militarily formidable as Baluchis, were much given to brigandage and cattle-rustling. Denizens of the area between the Sutlej and Ravi Rivers (later British District Montgomery) had been especially troublesome.



Sawan Mal maintained control by stern measures, such as burning villages where serious crimes occurred. Even so the Ravi tribes arose in 1843, plundering extensively before they could be suppressed.<sup>45</sup>

The danger always existed that a powerful frontier governor would be tempted to try either to break away or seize control of the central government. Nonetheless, Sawan Mal and Ranjit Singh had contrived to coexist because each recognized his dependence on the other. Aware that he could never hope to defeat the main *Khalsa* army, the *Nazim* was too astute to provoke the Maharaja by overt defiance. Unless challenged directly, Ranjit Singh was loath to disturb a valuable prop of his regime. Sawan Mal was both a conspicuously successful revenue producer and a counterpoise to other factions in the state, notably the formidable Dogra Rajas from Jammu. The delicate equilibrium between the *Nazim* of Multan and central authority did not long survive the passing of Ranjit Singh (1839). The kingdom began to slide into chaos and the Dogras, bitter enemies of Sawan Mal, became supreme at court. Sawan would probably have attempted to break free of Lahore had not his assassination intervened.

Diwan Mulraj inherited the challenge of a vulnerable frontier and restless population. In addition, the central government was less friendly than in the era of Ranjit Singh. Nevertheless, the Diwan as noted above dealt effectively with an army mutiny in 1844 and a nomad uprising in 1845. His grip did not begin to slip seriously until after the First Sikh War, due largely to the "destabilization" of his government, whether intentional or not, by the East India Company. By creating a doubt as to who was the real master in Multan, the Company inspired the *Nazim's* subjects, always on the alert for signs of governmental weakness, to defy him. British sources generally ascribe Mulraj's resentment of dictation from Lahore to the injured pride of a man who could not forget that his father had been a sovereign in all but name. While this motive may well have been present, it appears highly probable that the Diwan was also indignant at the way in which outside interference was sapping his ability to govern.

Company officials, particularly John Lawrence, miscalculated dangerously in assuming that an obstinate individual was the only problem in Multan. In fact Mulraj was merely the tip of an iceberg. Multanis long had been accustomed to going

their own way. Discrediting the Diwan in the eyes of his subjects did not ensure that the Company could take over the province unopposed. Having lost their awe of the *Nazim's* authority, the turbulent Multanis were hardly likely to submit meekly to any outside authority.

### III

By late 1847 Mulraj's situation had become virtually untenable. In addition to British pressures, he was plagued by family dissensions. He was already estranged from a cousin, Davi Dyal (by John Lawrence's account a clever, unscrupulous debauchee), who had ably represented Sawan Mal as *vakil* at Lahore.<sup>46</sup> In July 1847 Mulraj fell out as well with his brother Karam Narayan, who had been bearing part of the burden of government. Karam put in a claim for a greater share of their father's legacy, including by one account half the province. Mulraj promptly imprisoned his brother and turned the latter's personal troops out of the Multan citadel. In so doing, however, he lost another ally.<sup>47</sup> Emboldened by the Diwan's various embarrassments, the populace grew restive and his *kardars* insubordinate.<sup>48</sup>

In November 1847, the *Nazim* resolved to resign his post unless better terms could be obtained from Henry Lawrence. The Resident had just returned from convalescing in Simla but was due to depart shortly for England on sick leave. Learning that Mulraj desired an interview, the Resident wrote urging him to lose no time in coming to Lahore and encouraging him to persevere in office. Henry advised Mulraj that the Durbar would compensate him for defalcations of some Multani *kardars* who had absconded into Jhang. Instead of being disheartened by the rebellious attitude of his subjects the Diwan should use troops against them.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, Mulraj did not arrive until 2 December, a day after the Resident's departure, and was obliged to deal with Acting Resident John Lawrence.<sup>50</sup>

John Lawrence, testifying at the trial of Mulraj (June 1849), insisted that he received the *Nazim* with kindness and that the latter knew him for a friend.<sup>51</sup> The record suggests, however, that the Acting Resident gave Mulraj little sympathy or encouragement. Moreover, previous relations with John Law-



rence had inspired little confidence in the Diwan.

Mulraj sought to resign under the following conditions: that no complaints against his conduct in office be entertained; that he be provided for in retirement (preferably by means of a *jagir*); and that he be permitted to retain all of the state's share of the *kharif* (autumn) harvest.<sup>52</sup> Interpreting this talk of resignation as a stratagem to secure reduction in the tribute, John Lawrence informed Mulraj on 15th December that the Durbar had not interfered in Multan as alleged; that he would get no reduction; and that he was welcome to resign. The Acting Resident declared bluntly that those who held no *jagirs* could not expect any.<sup>53</sup> Having received no satisfaction, Mulraj determined upon resignation.

John Lawrence reported to the Government of India that it would be inconvenient for the Diwan to step down just then, all British personnel being occupied elsewhere. In a year's time, however, it would be expedient to "get rid of" him, for under British management the province would yield substantially more revenue.<sup>54</sup> If Mulraj suspected John's intentions, he may well have wished to retire at a time of his own choosing rather than waiting for the ax to fall.

On 18 December 1847, Mulraj notified the Durbar of his resignation effective retroactively from beginning of the last *kharif* harvest. He alleged that the timing should make no difference to the *Sirkar* since no *kharif* revenue had been collected yet. The Acting Resident objected that a change of administrations in midst of the collection of the *kharif* revenue would cause the Durbar to lose much of its due. If Mulraj was in earnest, he might step down at commencement of the *rabi* (spring) harvest.<sup>55</sup>

In a private talk with John Lawrence afterwards, Mulraj aired various grievances but objected most strongly to the central government entertaining complaints against him. If this practice ceased he would continue in office. Lawrence remained adamant that there was no room for a *Nazim* who was not subordinate to Government.<sup>56</sup> To an orderly mind like John Lawrence's the anomalous status of Multan was an irritant: either the province was part of Punjab or it was not. Having received frequent complaints from merchants and agriculturists about exactions by the Diwan, the Acting Resident supposed he feared scrutiny by the central government as a result of having something to hide. When John Lawrence confronted



Mulraj with a report that he had imposed illegal tolls on boats on the Indus, the latter did not deny it and undertook to pay back Rs. 50,000 levied illegally.<sup>57</sup> Again, the Acting Resident did not appreciate the extent to which hearing of appeals by higher authority undermined Mulraj's position. Once Multanis learned that the provincial governor was no longer the final authority, the erosion of his power accelerated. The Diwan's merits or demerits were beside the point. Even Sawan Mal would have had difficulty in coping with the changes introduced by the British Residency.

Mulraj's dilemma highlighted a contradiction inherent in the policy of indirect rule. No matter how desirous the British were of working through indigenous institutions, their very presence provided an alternate avenue of redress. Those who were dissatisfied resorted to the new *sahibs*, who could not in good conscience deny a hearing. Some Assistants to the Resident, such as Reynell Taylor, even encouraged people to step forward with grievances. When rebuked by Henry Lawrence, Taylor retorted that he solicited complaints, "as I did not believe that their silence proceeded from a want of cause of complaint, though I was inclined to think that they have suffered no immediate acts of oppression and very likely doubted the probability of gaining redress for evils of long standing during my flying visit."<sup>58</sup> Word spread that the European *sahibs* dispensed a marvelous form of justice, leading Assistant Arthur Cocks to remark: "Every inhabitant of a new country in the east looks upon English justice as a kind of *jadhoo* or witchcraft, that he has only to reach a British court of justice and that he must obtain the object of his wishes, forgetting that there are frequently two sides to a question, and that at any rate his *ipse dixit* is not sufficient."<sup>59</sup> Existence of a rival center of authority thus eroded both Punjabi institutions and the position of traditional power-wielders. Perhaps even Henry Lawrence could not have overcome the contradiction. John Lawrence did not try.

At the Acting Resident's insistence, Mulraj agreed to remain in office till April 1848, the start of the next *rabi* harvest. Upon again raising the question of a *jagir*, Mulraj was told that, while nothing could be guaranteed, worthy servants of the *Sirkar* were customarily rewarded. Unknown to the Diwan, Henry Lawrence had suggested putting him on the Council of Regency—a position that carried a *jagir* with it. The Acting

Resident chose to keep silent about this, partly to insure Mulraj's cooperation in the transfer of power and partly because the Government of India had not yet approved Henry's proposal.<sup>60</sup>

Having disposed (as he thought) of Mulraj, John Lawrence turned to contemplating an anticipated revenue windfall from the takeover of Multan that would compensate the State for lowered assessments elsewhere. Lawrence considered that the yearly payment of twenty-two lakhs had fallen far short of the Diwan's collections and that the new province could be made to yield an additional Rs. 700,000 to 800,000.<sup>61</sup> A preoccupation with revenue matters was to be expected in one who had spent most of his official life as a Collector in Delhi Territory. Arguing for a speedy revenue settlement of Punjab, John Lawrence stated his credo that: "the Maafeedars (revenue assignees) are but a class and that not the most influential. A moderate, and certain, land tax, for a term of years, would be felt as a general benefit by the whole country."<sup>62</sup> Although an accomplished revenue officer, John Lawrence lacked the understanding of political factors which Henry Lawrence had acquired in a career as political officer. The sequel to the resignation of Mulraj was to demonstrate that the Acting Resident had misread the Multan situation.

In the Sikh kingdom political power was diffused among individuals and groups. Hence personal likes, dislikes, and ambitions controlled the political process. Paramount power resided in Ranjit Singh whose concern it was to maintain an equilibrium among contending individuals and factions so that none grew strong enough to threaten him. Thus, relations between the Diwans of Multan and the center must be seen in context of the fluid and often capricious system sketched above. So long as the revenue was paid on schedule, the frontiers defended, and no attack threatened the Maharaja's sovereignty, he was content to let well enough alone and allow the independence of Multan to grow by default. The position of the local rulers of Multan became but a microcosm of the



scene in Lahore. To survive they too had to rule by consensus while retaining the ultimate power of decision to themselves.

This autonomy began to waver with the death of Ranjit Singh and the rise to power of the enemies of the Multani ruler. Subsequently, the arrival of the British in Punjab with preconceptions of reforms under a strong centralized government led to revenue and customs reforms in territories under the Durbar that made Multanis unhappy with their lot. More importantly, the erosion of Mulraj's power by the willingness of British officials to hear and adjudicate complaints against him provided Multanis an option with which Mulraj felt he could not compete.

Mulraj felt that the doctrine of the indivisibility of sovereignty expressed by John Lawrence was as true for himself as for the Government. Therefore, Mulraj felt he had no course remaining but to resign. There is little doubt that family squabbles contributed to his determination.

The resignation of Diwan Mulraj unleashed forces that both Sawan Mal and he had contrived to hold in check. Before the Company integrated Multan into Punjab it too would have to master these forces.

## NOTES

1. G. L. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, II, 99. Testimony of Raizada Tulsi Ram, Sita Ram Kohli (ed.), *Trial of Diwan Mul Raj* (Patiala, East Punjab, 1971), p. 113. Joseph Davey Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs: From the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Sutlej*, H.L.O. Garrett, (ed), (3rd. ed., New Delhi, 1966), p. 243.
2. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 392.
3. The Jullundur Doab was incorporated into British India; Kashmir was handed over to Raja Gulab Singh, a powerful noble of the Sikh court who had covertly aided the Company during the late war.
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*Archives of India: Government of India Foreign (Secret) Proceedings*, No. 1236 in volume for December 26, 1846, p. 5065.

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13. Cunningham, pp. 381-82.
14. *Resident's Political Diaries*, i.
15. John Lawrence to Government of India, November 16, 1847, in United Kingdom, Parliament, *Papers Relating to the Punjab, 1847-1849: Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty*, May, 1849 (London, n.d.), p. 94. (Henceforth cited as *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*).
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18. W.L. Burn, *The Age of Equipose: A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation* (New York, 1965), pp. 153-61, 224.
19. *Oxford History of India*, pp. 617-19.
20. Entries for April 2 and 4, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, pp. 82-85. Resident to Gol, April 29, 1847, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 6.
21. Entry for August, 29, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, p. 270. Mulraj erred in one particular. Corée labor was used to clear canals. (Lieutenant Hugh James, "Canals of the Mooltan District," *Selections from the Public Correspondence of the Board of Administration for the Affairs of the Punjab* (Lahore, 1853), No. 1 of Vol. I, 3.
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23. Acting Resident to Gol, December 16, 1847, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 91. Entry for March 10, 1848, *Edwardes' Political Diaries*, p. 287.
24. Entry for December 13, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, p. 384. See also entry for November 20, 1847, p. 354.
25. Entries for October 26 and 28th, 1847, in *Resident's Political Diaries*, pp. 327, 329.
26. Entries for March 8, March 9, and March 10, 1848, *Edwardes' Political Diaries*, pp. 285-87.
27. Entry for October 26, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, p. 327.
28. Entry for May 9, 1847, *ibid.*, p. 144.
29. Testimony of John Lawrence at trial of Mulraj (June 1849), in Sita Ram Kohli, (ed.), *Trial of Diwan Mul Raj* (Punjab, Government Reprint, 1971), p. 101.
30. Entry for July 9, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, p. 211.
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32. Entry for August 21, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, p. 264.
33. S.S. Thorburn, pp. 83-85, 89-94.
34. Resident to Gol, July 3, 1847, "*Parliamentary Papers, Punjab*," p. 59.
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37. Acting Resident to GoI, March 31, 1848, "Parliamentary Papers, Punjab," p. 152.
38. William H. McNeil, *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community* (Chicago, 1963), pp. 16-18, 21-22, 102-09, 234-37, 484-85, 494.
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40. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Frontier in American History," in Andrew S. Berkley and James P. Shenton (eds.), *The Historians' History of the United States* (2 vols.; New York, 1966), I, 463, 473. See also Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier* (3rd. ed.; New York, 1967), pp. 1, 3-8, 11.
41. G.L. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 392.
42. Lala Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar III, (Parts I-V): Chronicle of the Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 1831-1839 A.D.*, trans. and ed. by V.S. Suri (Delhi, 1961), pp. 302-03.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 390, 394, 403.
44. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 97.
45. W.E. Purser, *Montgomery District Settlement Report, 1879, (Lahore, 1879)*, p. 38.
46. J. Lawrence to GoI, November 3, 1846, NAI: GoI Foreign (Secret) Proceedings, No. 1236 in Vol. for December, 26, 1846, p. 5067.
47. Entry for August 21, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, p. 227.
48. Entry for December 13, 1847, *Ibid.*, p. 384. Petition received from Mulraj on November 21, 1847, in *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 90.
49. Entries for November 16, 17, and 18, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, pp. 351-52.
50. Entry for December 2, 1847, in *Ibid.*, p. 371.
51. *Trial of Mul Raj*, pp. 100, 102.
52. Petition received November 21, 1847, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, 90.
53. Acting Resident to GoI, December 15, 1847, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 94.
54. Acting Resident to GoI, December 15, 1847, *Ibid.*, p. 94.
55. Entry for December 18, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, pp. 389-90.
56. *Trial of Mul Raj*, p. 101.
57. Acting Resident of GoI, December 16, 1847, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 94. Acting Resident to GoI, January 31, 1848, *Ibid.*, p. 105. Entry for December 8, 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, p. 379.
58. Entries for May 19 and May 21, 1847, Taylor's political diaries, in *Punjab Government, Political Diaries of Lieutenant Reynell G. Taylor, Mr. P. Sandys Melville, Pandit Kanhaya Lal, Mr. P.A. Vans Agnew, Lieutenant J. Nicholson, Mr. L. Bowring and Mr. A.H. Cocks, 1847-49 (Allahabad, 1915)*, pp. 4-5.
59. Entry for June 1, 1847, Cocks' political diaries, *Ibid.*, p. 419.
60. Acting Resident to GoI, December 27, 1847, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 88. *Trial of Mul Raj*, p. 102.
61. Acting Resident to GoI, January 1, 1848, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, pp. 111-12.
62. Acting Resident to GoI, August 28, 1847, "Parliamentary Papers, Punjab," p. 94.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Uprising at Multan, April 1848

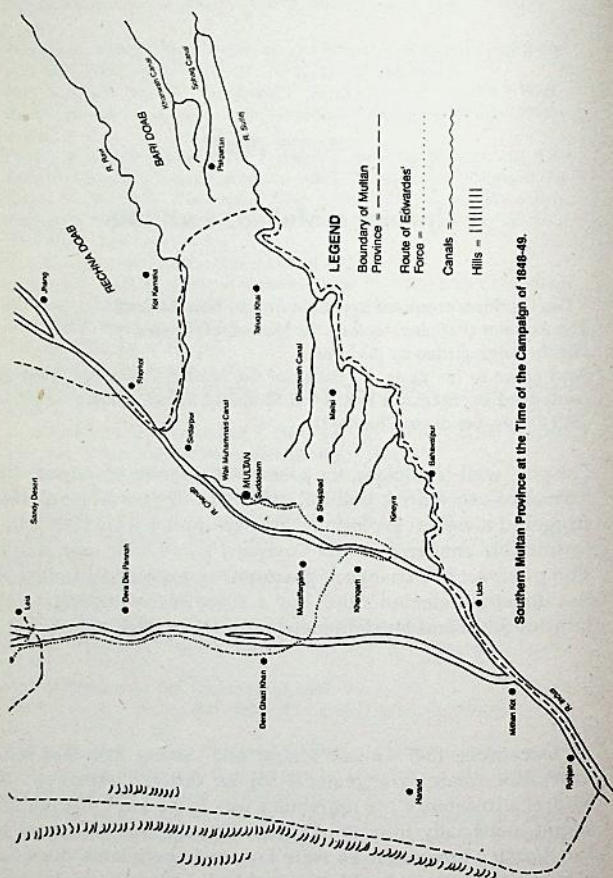
"The Gurkhas promised to remain firm by him [Mulraj].  
The Rohelas (Pathans) took up the load of responsibility.  
Hindu Singh girded up his loins  
And came to his guns. "—Ballad of the Multan Campaign, 1848-49,  
composed by Sobha, a Baluchi of Shujabad Tahsil, *Multan Gazetteer*,  
1901-02, Appendix to Chapter II.

Despite well-laid plans for a smooth transfer of power, the arrival of two British political officers in Multan in April 1848 triggered a violent explosion. The two officers were slain and a formidable challenge to the Company's authority took shape. The prospect of a change of government temporarily united all the disparate elements that had a stake in the existing order: Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim, merchant, civil official, and soldier.

#### I

In December 1847 Diwan Mulraj and Acting Resident John Lawrence made arrangements for an orderly transition. At Mulraj's insistence his retirement was to be kept a profound secret, especially from the Durbar. Secrecy was obviously in the *Nazim's* interest; if he were known to be a lame duck his already-shaky grip on Multan would be eroded still further. Concealment was equally to the advantage of Government, since premature disclosure would allow opposition time to solidify. Two Company's officers were to come to Multan two or three months prior to the *Nazim's* stepping down in April 1848. This would permit them to become acquainted with the





country and gradually take over the reins of government before formally assuming charge. The advent of British officers was not likely to betray Mulraj's intention to resign. *Sahibs* were continually going to and fro in Punjab, making inspections and revenue settlements, without arousing any particular notice.<sup>1</sup>

Regrettably, these well-conceived measures were scrapped. When John Lawrence informed the Government of India of his arrangements, he was directed to do nothing till the newly-appointed Resident, Sir Frederic Currie, reached Lahore. Currie did not arrive until early March 1848, later than anticipated. By then it was too late to carry out the original plan of having a pair of officers go to Multan well in advance of Mulraj's departure. Consequently, instead of becoming gradually accustomed to the presence of Company representatives, Multanis beheld them for the first time when they appeared to abruptly take over the province in mid-April. Secrecy, Mulraj's *sine qua non*, also went by the board. Currie considered that a matter of such importance as the resignation of a Nazim ought to be discussed with the Durbar. When reminded by Lawrence of the pledge of secrecy to Mulraj, the Resident took the position that no harm would be done as the resignation already was widely rumored. Accordingly, the Durbar was informed and consented to Mulraj's resignation on 24 March.<sup>2</sup>

Patrick Vans Agnew, Bengal Civil Service, and Lieutenant W.A. Anderson, Bombay Army, reached Multan City on 17 April 1848. They were accompanied by a figurehead Sikh *Nazim*, Sardar Kahan Singh Man, and a sizable escort of Durbar troops.

The officers walked into a highly volatile situation. A change of government posed a threat to all major provincial interest groups. The Muslim and Sikh soldiery feared that the bulk of them would be discharged to make room for the men of the Durbar contingent. Since the local army was then about 2000 strong and the escort numbered 1300, drastic cuts seemed in the cards.<sup>3</sup> The troops' apprehensions were entirely justified, Vans Agnew, the senior of the political officers, was under orders to consolidate the best men of the two Sikh regular regiments at Multan into one full-strength regiment and send it to Lahore, pensioning off the excess men. Superfluous irregulars were also to be discharged, the extent of reductions being left to Vans Agnew's judgment. New levies, fort garri-



sons, and detachments under *kardars* would be hardest hit.<sup>4</sup> These projected reductions threatened both Sikh regulars and Muslim irregulars alike. Even Sikhs retained in service were to be hustled off to Lahore, hardly a welcome prospect for men long settled at Multan.

Hindu officials, who owed their positions to Mulraj, worried that a change of rulers might cost them their jobs. Representative of this class were: Ram Rang, a Kapur Khatri and in-law of Mulraj, who commanded an artillery regiment and twenty-five cavalymen; Buddhu Mal, a Malhotra Khatri, who served as treasurer for Bhakkar District on the Indus and the customs revenues of Leia; Sham Singh, a Khatri Sikh of the Chopra sub-caste, who assisted in collecting the revenues of three districts; and Raizada Tulsi Ram, a Saighal Khatri, who had served both Sawan Mal and Mulraj as a letter writer.<sup>5</sup> That the uneasiness of local functionaries was not baseless is shown by the fact that at least three "lean and hungry" job-seekers are known to have followed in the Englishmen's train: Qutb Shah, a friend of Kahan Singh; Bhansi Dhar, A Gaur Brahmin of Aligarh District, British India; and Wazir Ali Khan, a Hindustani.<sup>6</sup>

The Hindu banking and mercantile community had no reason for joy at the impending change. They had prospered under Khatri rule for more than thirty years and may well have anticipated oppression from the Durbar.<sup>7</sup>

## II

Vans Agnew aggravated an already ticklish state of affairs by high-handed conduct at an interview with Mulraj on 18 April. With the massive citadel still in the bands of Multani forces, the political officer demanded revenue accounts for the past ten years from the *Nazim*. Suspecting a design to delve into his finances, Mulraj claimed to have papers only for the three years of his governorship. Insects had eaten all prior records! Vans Agnew assured him that the information was sought solely for use in making a new settlement. A compromise was then reached whereby accounts for six years would be produced. Next the political officer proclaimed that Mulraj would have to answer any complaints against his conduct in office. The Diwan rejoined: "I according to the custom of the

country have fined parties for any wrong act or acts of violence, such as murder or thefts from grain stores, or other thefts. I gave in my resignation to avoid giving an answer in these very cases; you now order me to do so, and you are supreme." The Englishman now relented so far as to promise to entertain only complaints less than a year old and to refer these to Mulraj for adjudication.<sup>8</sup>

Even though Vans Agnew softened his initial demands, the damage already had been done. In a thoughtful analysis of the causes of the Multan outbreak, a high Company official observed:

... a body of followers and soldiery, sensitive on the honour of their Governor and unaccustomed to the forms of office in the British Provinces might have been excited by the reports of the abrupt and imperious bearing of Mr. Agnew on the day of his arrival, when his proceedings exhibit more of the prompt and decided tone of an Englishman of business, going about an ejectment of a lessee, than the delicate and cautious conduct of a military diplomatist, who with cautious determination would first have placed his position beyond peril, and have proceeded then to take up open questions of old accounts, and of suits of petitioners which necessarily are very sore subjects in the Eastern world.<sup>9</sup>

Vans Agnew's behavior may have resulted in part from the circumstance that as a Bengal civil servant he was accustomed to settled provinces where an Englishman's word was law.<sup>10</sup>

On the morning of 19 April, the English officers, accompanied by Mulraj, inspected the fortress and formally took possession for the Lahore State. Vans Agnew strove with scant success to allay the garrison's fears of being thrown out of work. As the cavalcade emerged from the citadel, a soldier named Amir Chand attacked Vans Agnew with spear and sword, severely wounding him. In the prevailing climate of unrest, this spontaneous act by a notorious bad character and *bhang* addict was the one spark needed to ignite a general conflagration.<sup>11</sup>

After the initial assault events rapidly spun out of control. Mulraj fled to his residence in the Am Khas garden outside of town. Lieutenant Anderson attempted to escape on horseback, but was overtaken by a band of Multani *sowars* (cavalrymen) who cut him down with their sabers. The injured Englishmen were conveyed back to their camp at the Idgah Mosque,



situated about a mile from the Am Khas.<sup>12</sup> Mulraj's kinsman Ram Rang urged him to wait upon Vans Agnew to clear himself of any suspicion. The two set out for the Idgah, but were waylaid by mutinous Multani troops who prevented them from going and inflicted three nasty saber slashes upon Ram Rang. The entire Multan garrison, now totally beyond the Nazim's control, laid siege to the Idgah. On 20 April the Durbar escort deserted *en masse* to the insurgents, thereby sealing the fate of Vans Agnew and Anderson.<sup>13</sup> That evening the helpless men were murdered by a mob of local troops and townspeople. Thus ended the first act of the Multan rebellion.<sup>14</sup>

### III

The official interpretation of the Multan upheaval, which gelled quite early in the revolt, depicted it as almost exclusively the doing of Hindus and Sikhs. As will be seen below, there were compelling political reasons for exonerating Multani Muslims. Nonetheless, there is abundant testimony that Muslims participated wholeheartedly in the initial outbreak. Although Amir Chand was a Dogra Hindu, the *sowars* who fell upon Lieutenant Anderson were described as "Afghans, Mazhabis, and Sikhs."<sup>15</sup> A vignette of the scene on the afternoon of 19 April when the rebellious provincial soldiery urged Mulraj to lead them depicts Muslims and Sikhs swearing fidelity to the Diwan on the most potent symbols of their respective religions: Pathans on the *Koran* and Sikhs on the *Granth Sahib*.<sup>16</sup> The mob that burst into the wounded officers' quarters reportedly included, "soldiers, Hindus, Musalmans, Pathans, Sikhs, sweepers (*mazhabis*)."<sup>17</sup> Although a *mazhabi* (Untouchable) Sikh was eventually executed for the murder of Vans Agnew, there was in reality no reliable evidence as to who among that turbulent throng struck the fatal blow.

The inner workings of the April 1848 uprising were never completely laid bare.<sup>18</sup> The provincial troops may have mutinied

spontaneously, or they may have been instigated by officers or relatives of the *Nazim* who stood to lose by a change of government. It is clear that most of Mulraj's senior officers and kin, whether or not they had a hand inciting the mutiny, quickly latched on to it as a means of preserving their position.<sup>19</sup>

Even though the initial response of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims to a perceived common danger was to join forces against it, deep divisions separated them. The nature of these fault lines and how they were exploited by the Company to split the insurgent ranks, will be explored in a subsequent chapter.

## NOTES

1. Testimony of John Lawrence, Sita Ram Kohli, *Trial of Mul Raj*, p. 102.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 103. John Lawrence pointed out to no avail that there was a material difference between something being merely rumored and being officially announced.
3. The Multan army had fallen from a peak strength of 12,000 at the time of the First Anglo-Sikh War to about 6000 when Mulraj tendered his resignation in December 1847. The *Nazim* subsequently made large reductions in preparation for retirement. Doubtless many of these disbanded troops were still hanging about the capital in April, adding another element of danger to the situation.
4. Frederic Currie to Patrick Vans Agnew, 5 April 1848, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 126. Testimony of John Lawrence, *Trial of Mul Raj*, p. 106. It was perhaps significant that the initial assault on Vans Agnew was made by an irregular sepoy.
5. *Trial of Mul Raj*, pp. 118, 124, 127, 128, 130, 108.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 50, 70, 148, Appendix B, xiii. Wazir Ali had been in government employ in British territory prior to 1833. He claimed to have been Vans Agnew's *sarishtadar* but in fact held no official position, having gone along in hopes of finding work at Multan. Captain Hamilton, defense counsel at the trial of Mulraj, characterized Wazir Ali, a prosecution witness, as "one of those harpies who infest and disgrace our courts," (who) after losing his character in his own country, has come to look for fresh prey in a new land which his ill fame had not reached." Neither prosecution counsel nor the Court contradicted this statement.
7. Captain Hamilton's Speech for the Defence, *Ibid.*, p. 157.
8. Testimony of Tulsi Ram, *Ibid.*, p. 110.
9. Grounds of the Court's Judgment, by C.G. Mansel. President of the Court, *Ibid.*, p. 182.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
12. Mulraj's relative Ram Rang took Vans Agnew back to the Idgah on an



- elephant; some of the Durbar troops carried Anderson there on a cot (charpai).
13. At this time the Khalsa army was seething with resentment towards the Company's dominance in Punjab. The local flare-up afforded the men of the political officers' escort an opportunity to act on their feelings.
  14. *Trial of Mul Raj*, pp. 6-10.
  15. Deposition of Wazir Ali Khan, *Ibid.*, Appendix B, x.
  16. Testimony of Raizada Tulsi Ram, *Ibid.*, p. 112.
  17. Testimony of Qutb Shah, *Ibid.*, p. 53.
  18. It is somewhat curious that the origins of the Multan revolt were never subjected to a thorough scrutiny. The trial of *ex-Nazim* Mulraj (May-June 1849) would have been an ideal vehicle for such an inquiry, but he was charged solely with the murders of Vans Agnew and Anderson. One reason for letting sleeping dogs lie may have been that any investigation would have disclosed that many prominent Multanis who ended up as Company allies had begun as leaders of the insurrection.
  19. *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, II, 103-04.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **The Antagonists: Herbert Edwardes and Diwan Mulraj, 1848-1849**

"In my little sphere, I gave my whole soul to the establishment of that vast and priceless blessing—Peace; and can truly say that no man assisted me without being rewarded, and no man opposed me without being punished. This was well known; and when I held up my hand for soldiers, the soldiers came; and when I turned my back upon the province during an imperial war, peace still reigned undisturbed behind me."—Herbert Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier in 1848-49*, II, 582-83.

"This whole affair was ordained by Providence, and my own force did attempt to kill and insult me; of my deliberate will I would never have done what I have; nevertheless, I confess myself an offender in every way. If you grant me my life, and protection to my women, I surrender: otherwise—'It is better to die with honour than to live with disgrace.'

You are a sea of compassion; if you forgive me, you very well can; if you do not, I am resigned to my fate."—Letter of Diwan Mulraj to Major-General Whish, commanding the besieging army, 21 January 1849, trans. by Sita Ram Kohli, *Trial of Mul Raj*, Appendix F.

On one level the Multan Campaign was a duel between Herbert Edwardes, a political officer on the Derajat Frontier, and Diwan Mulraj, a rebel by force of circumstances. The personalities and capabilities of these two individuals significantly affected the course of the revolt.

In pre-Annexation Punjab, personal leadership loomed large because political and military systems were non-bureaucratic, i.e. were not impersonal entities with lives of their own. The vitality of social institutions, which took the place to a great



extent of political institutions, inhibited the growth of bureaucracy. People owed allegiance to and expected the satisfaction of needs from social groups—families, clans, village communities (in which the bond of union was usually some real or fictitious blood tie), castes, and tribes. Membership in and status within these bodies was ascriptive (determined by birth). In such an environment, objective institutions were little needed and indeed viewed with suspicion. By contrast, dynamic individuals could gain political power by building followings that transcended ascriptive categories. Conceivably, Punjabis sensed that overlords whose power died with them posed less threat to the extensive autonomy enjoyed by social groups than did undying bureaucracies. Moreover, personal leadership was familiar, for within social groups much authority resided in individuals such as heads of families and clan chieftains. Equally important was a penchant for collective leadership by such bodies as the headmen of a village, a clan council, or caste *panchayat*.

Individual and collective traditions of leadership were reconciled by the emphasis placed upon representatives of divergent interests arriving at a consensus. Although the head of a social unit inherited his position, force of character and diplomatic skill determined whether he ruled or merely reigned. Ability to forge consensus constituted the essence of successful leadership. Rulers such as Ranjit Singh and Sawan Mal operated on a larger scale than leaders of social groupings, but along similar lines. Their authority was personal rather than institutional and they governed by maintaining a balance among competing interests.

## I

Herbert Edwardes was a representative specimen of those hybrid soldier-diplomat-administrators who formed the cutting edge of British Indian expansion in the nineteenth century. Ambitious, bold, and resourceful, he owed his rise as much to dexterity with the pen as with the sword.

Herbert Edwardes belonged to the political service, an agency that represented the Government of India in areas not directly administered. Since such territories ranged from completely dependent to wholly sovereign, a political officer acted

on occasion as diplomat, administrator, soldier, or a combination of all three. In borderlands still in a state of flux (the North-Western, Northern, and North-Eastern Frontiers), responsibilities of "politicals" were the most diverse, each officer being called upon to negotiate with independent tribes, command troops, and administer secure areas.

Officers detached from the Company's armies filled most political appointments, the unfortunate Patrick Vans Agnew being an exception. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the territory of British India expanded at a far greater rate than did the Civil Service. As a stop-gap measure Government drew personnel from the army. European military officers were underemployed because after 1796 Company regiments were provided with as many white officers as Royal regiments, in addition to a full compliment of Indian officers. Augmenting the salaries of men already on the military payroll was more economical than engaging additional civil servants. Soldiers moreover were well-suited to those frontier assignments requiring familiarity with both sword and pen. Military men were employed extensively on diplomatic missions beyond the frontiers ("soldier-politicals") and as administrators in new territory ("soldier-civilians").<sup>1</sup> No hard-and-fast line could be drawn between diplomats and administrators. The majority of Henry Lawrence's Assistants became civil officers in post-Annexation Punjab.

Attractions of the "political line" consisted of better pay, excitement, freedom from routine, and a greater chance of rapid preferment. As Reynell Taylor, a friend and colleague of Edwardes, observed, political work was "by far the best line for a military man to get into; it contains all the best plums, and even in the lower grades a man is in a more responsible and independent position than he is with his regiment."<sup>2</sup>

After joining the First Bengal Europeans as Second Lieutenant in 1842, Edwardes began studying languages in preparation for a political career. Knowledge of local languages was not only required of political officers but opened the way to a staff appointment as interpreter. Staff officers were ideally situated for ingratiating themselves with the superiors who dispensed political appointments. Having passed examinations in Hindi, Hindustani (Urdu), and Persian, Edwardes qualified as interpreter in 1845.<sup>3</sup>

One needed an influential patron to break into the political



line. In 1845, Commander-in-Chief Lord Gough made Edwardes an aide-de-camp. He served in this capacity during the First Sikh War and subsequently accompanied Gough to Simla. There Edwardes made the acquaintance of Henry Lawrence, who was sufficiently impressed to request his services in Punjab. This crucial encounter was thus a direct result of Edwardes being on the Commander-in-Chief's staff.<sup>1</sup>

Facility with the pen assisted Edwardes' rise. S.S. Thorburn, a distinguished civil servant of the late nineteenth century, wrote:

... in the days of the Lawrences and even later, Government servants who had the gift were openly press correspondents or leader writers, and in their literary efforts not only criticized the proceedings of individual officers, but even of departments and the Government itself. In some cases they edited newspapers and owed their advancement in the service to the freedom and ability with which they used their pens. But *tempora mutantur*. What was then an approved avenue to official success is now a certain road to official failure.<sup>2</sup>

While still attached to his regiment, Edwardes contributed an anonymous series of articles to the *Delhi Gazette*: "Brahmanee Bull's Letters in India to his Cousin John Bull in England." These able discussions of the recent Afghan catastrophe and other issues of the day won the respect of many, including then Resident in Nepal Henry Lawrence. Edwardes' wife and worshipful biographer, Emma, held that the essays proved his fitness "for the larger sphere of 'political life' that he desired." When the regimental mess tried to guess the author of the articles, Herbert "kept his own counsel . . . and was not discovered until he chose to reveal their real authorship." He first divulged the identity of "Brahmanee Bull" upon meeting Henry Lawrence at Simla.<sup>3</sup> Herbert evidently wrote the articles in order to further his goal of a political career and saved the secret for the one he needed to impress, the newly-appointed Agent for the North-West Frontier. An incident at a banquet at Lahore in 1846 shed additional light on Edwardes' motives:

... it was said that an appointment which had recently been conferred on the young officer (Edwardes) was given with a view to stop his too facile pen. Such was the gossip in camp; so the amusement of all present may be imagined when 'dear little Arthur' [son of Governor-General Hardinge] in his clear boyish accent shouted from the

other end of the table, "I suppose you will not write any more 'Brahminy Bull' articles, now, will you Mr. Edwardes?" No one laughed more heartily than Lord Hardinge, who shook his fist playfully at his son.<sup>7</sup>

Edwardes' secret appeared less well-kept than he supposed.

The Punjab acted as a magnet for aspiring young "politicals." Reynell Taylor explained, "The North-West Frontier being still raw makes it a more likely place for a man to come strongly into notice."<sup>8</sup> Assistants to the Resident were adventurous, versatile, and fiercely individualistic. They also suffered from the defects of their virtues, notably overweening egoism. Both in strengths and weaknesses, Herbert Edwardes was typical of his class. He has been aptly characterized as a "combination of bright intelligence with strong prejudices."<sup>9</sup>

In 1847 Edwardes was despatched to Bannu District in the Derajat.<sup>10</sup> His mission was to institute a regular administration where previously the Sikhs had only invaded, plundered, and levied tribute. Edwardes pacified the Bannuchis, made them demolish some hundreds of forts from which they had bidden defiance to outside authority, and carried out a revenue settlement. He also acquired great personal influence over the Derajat tribes.

Edwardes attributed his hold over the people to "fixedness of purpose—a determination to make many barbarian wills give way to one that was civilized." While this sounds decidedly arrogant, arrogance was an important part of a political officer's stock in trade. Without supreme self-confidence and a goodly measure of ignorance to the dangers involved, "politicals" would not have taken the risks that they did. Furthermore, a bold front was required when dealing with untamed peoples who held meekness in low esteem. Edwardes could not, however, have swayed the proud, independent Pathans by airs of superiority alone. As Reynell Taylor, who worked with Edwardes in the Derajat, observed, no people were so easily influenced as Pathans "by an assiduous attention to their habits, wants, and troubles, by an officer who had leisure to devote to them, such leisure as Major Edwardes and myself had under the resident previous to annexation, when the details of district management were carried on by the officials of the Sikh Government."<sup>11</sup>

Edwardes acted to perfection the part of a first among equals—the Pathan conception of a leader. He learned their



ways, adopted their style of life, dressed as they did, spoke their language, listened sympathetically to their problems, and consulted frequently with their chieftains.<sup>12</sup> Edwardes handled *jirgas* (assemblies of chiefs and elders) masterfully. Pathan *maliks* (chiefs) could not command obedience; they persuaded by skill in debate. Like a *malik* Edwardes convened *jirgas* of chiefs, who sitting in a circle, expressed their opinions as freely as in their own *jirgas*. Those who differed with Edwardes argued "with all the ingenuity and acuteness, sharpened by long practice in such discussions, which they possess." Edwardes usually held his own in these exchanges.<sup>13</sup> Herbert's talent for intrigue, demonstrated in his previous maneuvering for preferment, doubtless stood him in good stead. Edwardes owed much of his success with Pathans to a genuine empathy with them. Something of a Pathan at heart, he acted the role of a *malik* with conviction. Frontier dwellers impressed him as frank and manly, a refreshing contrast to devious, servile Hindustanis. To Edwardes' eyes the Waziri chief Swahn Khan seemed to be an archetypal "noble savage:"

Swahn Khan is just what one might picture the leader of such a people: an enormous man, with a head like a lion, and a hand like a polar bear. He had on thick boots laced with thongs and rings, and trod my carpets like a lord. The Hindoostanee servants were struck dumb, and expected the earth to open and swallow the audacious Mullick. With his dirty cotton clothes, half redeemed by a pink *loongee* over his broad breast, and a rich dark shawl intertwined into locks that had never known a comb, a more splendid specimen of human nature in the rough I never saw. He made no bow, but with a simple 'Salaam Aleikoom' took his seat.<sup>14</sup>

As an Evangelical Christian, Edwardes was disposed to favor Muslims over "idolatrous" Sikhs and Hindus. Although critical of Muslim veneration of holy men and relics (reminiscent of Popery), he conceived of Islam as essentially a stern, simple monotheism. Edwardes praised his Pathan followers for devotion to their God (whom he perhaps equated with the God of the Old Testament), but heaped scorn on the "idolators" of Multan City "who, with fresh-painted foreheads, and garlands of flowers in their hands, prostrated with joy themselves before their unconscious gods, and thanked them for the death of the Christians."<sup>15</sup>

## II

When the Multan insurrection erupted, Herbert Edwardes was the right man in the right place. He grasped the importance of preventing the revolt from spreading and possessed the requisite local knowledge and influence to act decisively. From the Derajat he could recruit allies among the warlike frontier tribes and strike at Mulraj's vulnerable western flank. On his own initiative (though with the reluctant *ex post facto* blessing of the Resident) Edwardes proceeded to wage a private war against the rebel *Nazim*.<sup>16</sup>

At the very beginning of the campaign Edwardes formed a mutually-advantageous partnership with Faujdar Khan Alizai, a Pathan whose grandfather had fallen in the epic defense of Multan City against the Sikh power in 1818. Faujdar was collector of customs for the Lahore State at the Indus ferry between Dera Futteh Khan on the west bank and Leia on the east. Edwardes chanced to be camped at Dera Futteh Khan on the evening of 22 April 1848, when a panting foot-courier (*kossid*) brought word of the Multan outbreak. The political officer immediately sent for Faujdar Khan, who had struck him at a previous meeting as one whose intelligence and local knowledge would be useful in a crisis. The Pathan became Edwardes' right-hand man and proved invaluable.<sup>17</sup>

On the 23rd and 24th of April Edwardes crossed to the left bank of the Indus and occupied Leia, intending to press on to the rescue of Vans Agnew and Anderson, who were thought to be still holding out. Upon receiving news of his compatriots' deaths, the political officer decided to remain at Leia where he could enlist uncommitted Pathan and Baluchi fighting men from the Sind Sagor Doab.<sup>18</sup> Edwardes quickly realized it was vital to prevent the large floating mercenary population of south-west Punjab and the Derajat from taking service with the insurgents. Accordingly, he set about raising Pathan and Baluchi levies with the double object of strengthening his own forces and denying recruits to the enemy. Shortly after reaching Leia, Edwardes engaged Malik Khan of Kolachi, an unemployed mercenary chief of considerable renown. Malik Khan was to receive Rs. 50 per month; his ten *sowars*, Rs. 10. Invitations also went out to "Mullookh Khan and Bhera Khan, Budwal, Pathans similarly situated in the market." At the same time the commandant of Mankera Fort in the Sind Sagor Doab



was charged with preventing Pathans from enlisting under Mulraj.<sup>19</sup> The approach of a superior force from Multan forced Edwardes to fall back across the Indus on 2 May, but he continued to recruit irregulars.

A veritable "gathering of the clans" now took place. Being acquainted with every mercenary leader on both banks of the Indus, Faujdar Khan was instrumental in sewing up the services of twenty or thirty chieftains with 3000 swordsmen before Mulraj could put in his offers. The tumultuous host was "drawn from the wildest tribes on the Indus, many of them hostile to each other and all regarding plunder and revenge as moral duties." Faujdar performed yeoman service in maintaining some sort of order among them.<sup>20</sup>

Next to Faujdar Khan, the foremost of Edwardes' Pathan officers were Ghulam Kasim Khan Alizai and Ghulam Sirwar Khan Khakwani. At first the Englishman looked somewhat askance at Ghulam Kasim Khan (a cousin of Faujdar's) whose "delicate frame . . . gave no more promise of enduring the fatigues of war than did his perfumed locks and gossamer apparel of a clear intellect and daring heart." Kasim proved such a capable leader, however, that Edwardes came to entrust him with command of 500 or 1000 men, though his personal retinue numbered but 50.<sup>21</sup> Ghulam Sirwar Khan was a mercenary leader of wide experience, having fought at various times for the Nawab of Dera Ismael Khan, a ruler in Sind, and Amir Dost Muhammad Khan of Afghanistan. Out of work at the commencement of the rebellion, he joined Edwardes' standard with fifty horsemen and fought valiantly till a bullet crippled his right arm.<sup>22</sup>

By mid-May 1848 Edwardes felt strong enough to take the offensive against the Multani holdings west of the Indus (Dera Ghazi Khan District). His levies swept south and overran Dera Ghazi Khan with substantial assistance from friendly Baluchi tribes of the country. In early June a pinchers movement was launched against the heart of Mulraj's dominions between the Chenab and Sutlej. The army of Nawab Bahawal Khan of Bahawalpur, a Company ally, crossed the Sutlej into the extreme southern portion of Multan District. Shortly afterwards Edwardes ferried his levies over the Indus and raced across the Sind Sagor Doab towards the Chenab, intending to cross and link up with the Bahawalpuris. Meanwhile the Multani army moved south with the aim of crushing the

Nawab's forces before Edwardes could arrive.<sup>23</sup>

On the night of 17-18 June 3000 of Edwardes' irregulars crossed the Chenab in boats and joined forces with the Daudputras (as Bahawal Khan's subjects were commonly called). This junction came at the nick of time, for early the next morning the insurgents launched a fierce attack against the Daudputra army. After an all-day, see-saw battle near the village of Kineyre the Multanis were totally routed. This victory marked the turning point of the campaign, politically as well as militarily. Subsequently the bulk of Mulraj's Pathan troops defected to Edwardes, for reasons to be made clear in the next chapter.<sup>24</sup>

After Kineyre Edwardes' force and its Daudputra allies moved north against Multan City, Mulraj's position was still not hopeless. New Sikh recruits from eastern Punjab had about made good his losses from Muslim desertions. The Nazim's new army was far more homogeneous and pugnacious than his old. The insurgents, led by Mulraj in person, sallied out of the city and took up a strong position at the village of Suddoosam. Battle was joined on 1 July. The allies won the day but only after a desperate struggle. Edwardes acknowledged, "though our numbers were numerically very superior to the enemy (18,000 at least, to between 8 and 9,000), such was the fanaticism and desperation of the Dewan's religious warriors (mostly old Sikh regulars) that I honestly confess we had as much as we could do to give them a licking."<sup>25</sup>

Following Suddoosam the insurgents went to ground within the redoubtable fortifications of Multan and the campaign became a matter of siege warfare. Since Edwardes' irregulars were ill-suited for such operations, a force of Company's regulars with a siege train came down from Lahore. A contingent of Durbar troops under Raja Sher Singh Attariwala also joined the besiegers. Edwardes and his levies were on hand for the remainder of the campaign, though no longer in center stage.<sup>26</sup>

The Government forces suffered a severe check on 14 September when Sher Singh and his command deserted to the enemy. This was one manifestation of a growing restiveness in the *Khalsa* army that was soon to break out into the general rebellion known as the Second Sikh War. Sher Singh's defection so weakened the besiegers that they had to retire to a strong fortified position awaiting reinforcements.<sup>27</sup>

Edwardes had recourse to his "facile pen" to deepen



Mulraj's suspicions of his new ally. In what would now be termed "disinformation" the political officer drafted a letter ostensibly to Sher Singh from himself and used a double agent to place it in the *Nazim's* hands. Edwardes wrote as if the Raja was still in league with him and had pretended to change sides in order to betray Mulraj! The political officer even complimented Sher Singh on a fictitious joke of his about the prey (*i.e.* Mulraj) falling into the trap. Whether or not this ploy was decisive, the Diwan did refuse to admit Sher Singh's men into the citadel. In October the Raja marched off to northern Punjab where the *Khalsa* was mustering for a last stand against the *feringis* (Europeans).<sup>28</sup>

By fall 1848 the Second Sikh War was in full swing and Multan became a sideshow. The siege was resumed in late December with the assistance of a detachment of the Bombay Army. On 2 January 1849 Multan City was taken by storm after desperate street fighting. Mulraj held out in the citadel till 22 January when he capitulated. The Second Sikh War, which the Multan rebellion had spawned, ended with the final defeat of the *Khalsa* army in February. The annexation of Punjab to British India followed on 29 March.<sup>29</sup>

Herbert Edwardes succeeded in outflanking a rebellious frontier region from its own open frontier, employing manpower that would have been available to the opposition if not diverted. Such a strategy was not without precedent in British imperial annals. Henry Hamilton, commandant of Detroit during the American Revolution, employed Indian allies extensively against the American frontier. "As an expert leader he took part in the scalp dances and other rituals of Indian warfare and his policy, which was sound and in fact inevitable, was to reward those who brought in American scalps."<sup>30</sup> Edwardes and his fellow Punjab "politicals" may be seen as frontier partisan leaders in the same tradition as the "hairbuyer."

### III

The character of Diwan Mulraj is harder to appraise than that of his British nemesis. Since the *Nazim* neither wrote a book nor found a sympathetic biographer, he is known to posterity through the writings of his foes. As might be expected the

most negative views of the Diwan date from the period after his rebellion.

Herbert Edwardes branded Mulraj, "this assassin of his invited guests; this traitor who dethrones the dynasty under which his family rose from insignificance to honour; this rebel, who, striking selfishly for his own independence, has rivetted the chains of his country."<sup>31</sup> Edwardes also represented the Diwan as greedy, tyrannical, and a backslider from his father's policy of conciliating Muslims.<sup>32</sup> A more charitable observer, John Login, absolved Mulraj of the killings of Vans Agnew and Anderson on the grounds of being only "a weak, chicken-hearted fellow, afraid to do what was right and entirely in the hands of resolute villains around him."<sup>33</sup> The most favorable judgment on the *Nazim* portrayed him as an efficient civil administrator in quiet times but utterly at a loss in sudden crises such as the outburst of April 1848.<sup>34</sup>

British accounts predating the Multan insurrection give a considerably more positive impression of Mulraj. He was acknowledged to be a capable if severe ruler whose administration was more efficient than that of most Sikh provinces. Although described as grasping the Governor was credited with keeping his *kardars* too cowed to plunder on their account.<sup>35</sup> Patently, a man who ruled so turbulent a province with an iron hand was hardly "chicken-hearted."

Mulraj was capable of decisive action in crises as shown by his responses to the Sikh mutiny of 1844, the nomad insurrection of 1845, the Durbar invasion of 1846, and Karam Narayan's bid for a greater share of the family patrimony in 1847. Why then did he appear irresolute and helpless in April 1848? The most likely hypothesis is that the Diwan was overwhelmed by difficulties at a moment when his guard was down and his position was much weaker than in the past, due to circumstances beyond his control. When violence erupted, Mulraj had formally handed over charge and was doubtless looking forward to a quiet retirement. His authority moreover had been eroded by the Company's nibbling and undercut still further by public disclosure of his resignation. On the occasion of the 1844 mutiny, the *Nazim* had been able to play the Pathan troops off against the Sikhs and had the popular and able Karam Narayan at his side. In 1848 by contrast, Muslim and Sikh soldiers were for the moment united in urging rebellion and Karam Narayan was estranged from his brother. Mulraj's



only familial support came from Ram Rang, who was quickly placed *hors de combat* by saber slashes. Indeed most of his relations appear to have joined the chorus calling for revolt. A contemporary Punjabi ballad assigned a key role to Mulraj's mother, evidently a strong-willed matriarch:

Then the mother of Mulraj spoke to him: "I will kill myself leaving a curse behind (on your head). Either lead your forces to death or get out of my sight; (and) I shall undertake the wars in my own person. I shall send word to Shujabad and send for Sham Singh (my second son). I shall give rewards and put my forces on the battle-field."<sup>36</sup>

Sir Lepel Griffin, writing in 1865 when the passions of the Sikh War era had cooled, concisely summed up Mulraj's dilemma:

He was surrounded by relatives, friends and troops who depended upon him for place and wealth and power and who saw in a new Governor nothing but ruin to themselves. They determined to force Mul Raj to rebel, for his victory would enrich them, and his defeat could not be more injurious to them than his resignation.<sup>37</sup>

This analysis needs to be modified in one important particular. Mulraj was surrounded by people whose well-being depended on the continued existence of an autonomous *Nazim* in Multan, not on Mulraj's survival in office or indeed on his physical survival. As the Diwan's mother reputedly reminded him, there were other sons of Sawan Mal available to serve as figureheads. An acute awareness that he was expendable doubtless influenced the *Nazim's* eventual decision to accept leadership of the insurrection.

It is far from clear whether Mulraj threw in his lot with the rebels prior to the storming of the Idgah, in which case he would have been at least a passive accomplice to the deaths of the political officers, or whether he did so afterwards. The court that tried the ex-Governor for the murders of the pair, while exonerating him from complicity in the initial attacks on Vans Agnew and Anderson, found that at some point thereafter he concluded these occurrences had hopelessly compromised him with the authorities. Convinced that his only hope lay in a successful revolt, the Diwan allegedly sanctioned the attack on the Idgah and thus incurred responsibility for the officers' deaths.<sup>38</sup> Lepel Griffin's opinion, formed after the passage of considerable time, appears more judicious. In Sir Lepel's view, Mulraj was probably under restraint when the

Idgah was stormed and would have been in mortal danger from his own men if he had tried to negotiate a surrender at any subsequent date.<sup>39</sup> It seems most likely that Mulraj was a helpless spectator to the assault on the mosque, but that afterwards a combination of fear of his own followers, dread of British vengeance, and a feeling that fate had presented him with a golden opportunity to retain power led him to throw in wholeheartedly with the insurrection.<sup>40</sup>

Even those contemporary British observers who recognized that Mulraj was powerless to act nonetheless condemned him as a craven for not making a supreme effort to save Vans Agnew and Anderson. Presumably, he was expected to interpose his body between the mob and the wounded men and tell them they would have to slay him first. From the perspective of more than a century, one may suggest that it was not necessarily cowardice that kept the Diwan from acting thusly. Mulraj may not have felt an overwhelming obligation to hazard his life in a possibly vain attempt to succor "invited guests" who had come to supplant him. Vans Agnew's manner towards the *Nazim*, likened to that of a landlord evicting a tenant, can hardly have inspired devotion in the latter.

Once the die was cast, Diwan Mulraj fought with skill and resolution, enlisting "the trades-people, butchers, shoemakers, tailors, oil-men, buniahs, barbers, *fakirs*, and *sadhus* of Multan" at two rupees a head.<sup>41</sup> Proclaiming a holy war against the *feringis*, Mulraj mustered Sikh recruits from all over Punjab. Under his leadership Multan City resisted long and heroically.<sup>42</sup> One episode indicated considerable ability in managing men. In July 1848 rumors of an approaching British regular force demoralized the garrison, but Mulraj "revived the spirits of his soldiers with jests upon the delicate *Sahib log* who could not fight in the hot weather!!!"<sup>43</sup>

The charges of avarice, oppression, and anti-Muslim policies levelled against Mulraj are not fully supported by the record. He was a strict administrator who sought maximum profits, but Sawan Mal had done likewise. According to one authority, Mulraj was oppressive and avaricious as a young man. Sawan Mal reportedly sent out Karam Narayan and Mulraj to govern Leia and Jhang respectively, but recalled the latter when the inhabitants complained that, whereas Multan enjoyed *Sawan* (July-August, the month of rains) and Leia basked in *Karam* (gentleness), Jhang suffered from *Mulla* (a crop-destroying



insect). The same authority states somewhat puzzlingly that as *Nazim* Mulraj "much improved in disposition, yet . . . was always unpopular with the people."<sup>44</sup> It is noteworthy that prior to the Multan rebellion Herbert Edwardes reported hearing "but few dissentient voices to the general good opinion of his internal management of that country."<sup>45</sup>

Like all sons who succeed famous fathers, Mulraj could not escape unfavorable comparisons. Nonetheless, descriptions of the *Nazim* as a cold, suspicious, avaricious ruler seem overdrawn in light of the devotion of subordinates such as Langa Mal, the *kardar* of Dera Ghazi Khan. Even after being wounded in battle, captured, and put in irons, this officer contrived, by bribing his guards, to send messages to Mulraj. In order to set an example, Herbert Edwardes caused Langa Mal to be hung on a charge of treason against the Lahore State (whose authority the Company then professed to be upholding). The *kardar* "died without the least mark of trepidation, adjusting with his own hands the fatal noose."<sup>46</sup>

The accusation of anti-Muslim bias cannot be substantiated. Muslims were well represented at a council of leading officers which almost unanimously urged the Diwan to rebel.<sup>47</sup> Muslims occupied positions of trust and influence under Mulraj. As will be seen, they were able to do his cause grave damage by defecting precisely because he entrusted them with important responsibilities.<sup>48</sup>

The remainder of Diwan Mulraj's history after surrendering is soon told. In May 1849 he was put on trial at Lahore for the murders of Vans Agnew and Anderson. Despite an able defense by Captain G.W. Hamilton<sup>49</sup> Mulraj was found guilty and sentenced to death. The Court however recommended mercy for the prisoner as a victim of circumstances. Governor-General Dalhousie commuted the sentence to life imprisonment beyond the dreaded "black water" (*kala pani*). Mulraj was sent to Calcutta for transportation overseas, but his health broke down and it was not considered safe to go through with the sentence. The former *Nazim* died in Bengal in August 1851.<sup>50</sup>

The Multan campaign was one of those pivotal moments where individuals can shape the immediate course of events, but have scant effect upon broad historical processes. In a socio-political climate where men gave fealty to persons rather than to abstractions, Herbert Edwardes and Diwan Mulraj exerted considerable influence upon the tactical situation but what they did, or did not do, affected little the strategic result.

Edwardes and fellow "politicals," though glorying in freedom from red tape and routine, were nonetheless instruments of a bureaucracy engaged in spinning a web of uniformity across a subcontinent. In conquering frontiers, frontiersmen remove the reason for their own existence. Thus, Edwardes and his brethren lost as much by the subjection of Multan as did Mulraj and doomed themselves to constant pursuit of the evanescent frontier.

The *Nazim* of Multan exemplified a traditional mode of government, fast succumbing to British competition, in which personal overlords ruled by striking a balance among the interests of a variety of communities. The groups composing society tolerated such rulers because they mediated conflicts that otherwise would have to be resolved by force. Although worthy exponents of their respective systems, neither Mulraj nor Edwardes had the power to determine the outcome of a contest in which Multan was a sideshow rather than the main attraction.

## NOTES

1. V.A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, p. 625. Tapping the armed services for administrative talent was common practice in mid-Victorian England because, "when the civil service was ill-paid in most of its branches and looked upon with a good deal of contempt it was necessary to look outside its ranks when the State undertook new and unexpected duties." (W.L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise: A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation* (New York, 1965), p. 224).
2. Taylor to Father, 7 May 1846, quoted in E. Gambier Parry, *Reynell Taylor: A Biography* (London, 1886), pp. 66-68.
3. Emma Edwardes, *Memorials of the Life and Letters of Major-General Herbert B. Edwardes* (2 vols; London, 1888), I, 11-24.
4. *Ibid.*, I, 22-43.
5. S.S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 156-57.
6. *Memorials of Edwardes*, I, 23-24.



7. Anecdote by Balcarres Ramsay in Reginald Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, I, 167.
8. Parry, *Reynell Taylor*, p. 68.
9. *D.N.B.*, VI, 528.
10. *Year on the Frontier*, II, 582. The Derajat (so-called from its three principal towns Dera Ismael Khan, Dera Futteh Khan, and Dera Ghazi Khan) comprised the southern portion of the North-West Frontier. The northern Derajat (later Bannu and Dera Ismael Khan Districts) was under the Durbar; the southern segment (Dera Ghazi Khan District) belonged to Multan.
11. Reynell Taylor, "District Memorandum. Dera Ismael Khan, 1852," in Punjab Government, *Report showing the Relations of the British Government with the Tribes on the North-West Frontier of the Punjab, From Annexation in 1849 to the Close of 1855; And continuation of the same to August 1864* (Lahore, 1865), p. 118.
12. *Year on the Frontier*, II, 586.
13. Reynell Taylor, "Dera Ismael Khan Memorandum," *Relations of the British Government with the Tribes on the North-West Frontier*, p. 132.
14. Entry of 18 March 1847, in Punjab Government, *Political Diaries of Lieut. H.B. Edwardes, Assistant to the Resident at Lahore, 1847-49* (Allahabad, 1911), p. 320. (Henceforth cited as *Edwardes' Political Diaries*).
15. *Year on the Frontier*, II, 555, 587. After the Sepoy Rebellion, Edwardes displayed his religious zeal by advocating a "Christian policy" of governmental incentives for conversion. Governor-General Canning's reaction was that Edwardes should "have his head shaved. [He] is exactly what Mahomet would have been if born at Clapham instead of Mecca." Lord Canning to Sir Bartle Frere, quoted in John Martineau, *The Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere* (2 vols; London, 1895), I, 370.
16. As the man on the spot Edwardes possessed extensive freedom of action. It took approximately two weeks to receive a reply from the Resident at Lahore to one of his despatches. Therefore, the political officer often made major decisions on his own on the plea that it would take too long to obtain guidance from headquarters.
17. *Year on the Frontier*, II, 61-67.
18. Edwardes to Currie, 25 April 1848, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 151. The Sind Sagor Doab was the tract between the Indus and Chenab.
19. Entry of 24 April 1848, *Edwardes' Political Diaries*, p. 319.
20. India Office Records, Board of Control's Collections, Vol. 2386, 1849-50, Collection in 33 vols. (Nos. 127, 257-287, 289), to Political Department Draft No. 916 of 1850, VIII, 13-16.
21. *Ibid.*, VIII, 25, 27.
22. *Ibid.*, VIII, 22-25. See also, Punjab Government, *Titled Gentlemen and Chiefs other than Ruling Chiefs* (Lahore, 1878), pp. 142-43.
23. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 165-305 *passim*.
24. *Ibid.*, II, 306-26. The Daudputras could hardly have withstood the rebel assault unaided. By mid-afternoon Edwardes' undisciplined levies were in dire straits themselves, when a brigade of loyal Durbar regulars came to the rescue. These timely reinforcements were Muslims commanded by General Van Cortlandt, an Anglo-Indian soldier of fortune.
25. Edwardes to Resident Currie, 1 July 1849, Ganda Singh (ed.), *Private*

Correspondence relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars (Being Private Letters of Lords Ellenborough, Hardinge, Dalhousie, Gough, and of Political Assistants Addressed to Sir Frederick Currie as British Resident at Lahore, etc.) (Amritsar, 1955), p. 227. It must be remembered that Edwardes' frontier tribesmen, for all their raw courage, were not the equal of Sikh regulars as soldiers. The Khalsa army had been trained by veterans of Napoleon's legions and had learned its lessons exceedingly well.

26. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 385-470 *passim*.
27. *Ibid.*, II, 470-97.
28. *Ibid.*, II, 504-09.
29. *Ibid.*, II, 515-77 *passim*. Edward Thompson and G.T. Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* (Allahabad, 1969), 380-88.
30. Bernard De Voto, *The Course of Empire* (Boston, 1960), p. 269.
31. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 56-57. In labeling Mulraj a traitor to his sovereign and country, Edwardes' line of reasoning was that the Company was compelled to annex Punjab as a result of the Second Sikh War which grew out of the Multan rebellion: *ergo*, the Nazim was to blame for the loss of Punjabi independence.
32. *Ibid.*, II, 33-34, 160.
33. John Login to his wife, 10 June 1849 and 22 June 1849, in Lady Login, *Sir John Login and Duleep Singh* (London, 1890), pp. 164-67. Login was governor of the Lahore Citadel at the time of Mulraj's trial and had ample opportunity to become acquainted with him.
34. Grounds of the Court's Judgment, by C.G. Mansel, President of the Court, *Trial of Mul Raj*, 179-80.
35. Henry Lawrence to Government of India, 28 April 1847, United Kingdom, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (1849), Vol. XLI, Cmd. 1071, "Parliamentary Papers Relating to Punjab," p. 43. (Henceforth cited as "Parliamentary Papers, Punjab.").
36. Ballad by Hakim Chand, trans. by Sita Ram Kohli, *Trial of Mul Raj*, p. 9.
37. Sir Lepel Griffin and C.F. Massey, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families in the Lahore and Rawalpindi Divisions of the Punjab* (2 vols; Lahore, 1890), II, 167.
38. Grounds of the Court's Judgment, *Trial of Mul Raj*, pp. 184-87. There was a striking similarity between the rulings of British courts in Mulraj's case and that of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah. Following the 1857 Revolt, Bahadur Shah was found guilty not only of rebellion against the British Government but also of responsibility for the murders of 49 Europeans, mostly women and children. There was some justification for the first charge but very little for the second: at worst the eighty-two year old Mughal had yielded to the demands and threats of the mutineers and handed the prisoners over to them. (See, Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughuls: Studies in Late Mughul Delhi* (New Delhi, 1969), pp. 222-24.) The evidence for Mulraj's active complicity in the deaths of the political officers is equally flimsy.
39. G.L. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 103-04.
40. Mulraj's outlook perhaps resembled that of Bahadur Shah as described by Percival Spear (*Twilight*, p. 224). The old Emperor had not conspired to bring about a mutiny and was frightened and disgusted by the unruly sepoys. At the same time, he was prepared to profit if their efforts were



crowned with success and lent his moral authority to their actions.

41. *Trial of Mul Raj*, Appendix B, xiii.
42. Herbert Edwardes portrayed Mulraj as a complete coward who held out so long from dread of the hangman's noose and finally surrendered to avoid imminent death in battle. (*Year on the Frontier*, II, 161-63.) This seems highly questionable. At the time of the Diwan's capitulation, two breaches practicable for storming parties had been made in the ramparts of the citadel and its interior was a wreck. Under the military etiquette of the day, when things had come to such a pass the defenders of a fortress could surrender without incurring any dishonor.
43. Edwardes to Currie, 10 July 1848, Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence*, p. 231.
44. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 99.
45. Entry of 3 March 1848, *Edwardes' Political Diaries*, p. 276. Subsequent to the Multan insurrection, Edwardes recanted this opinion. He stated that anything admirable in Multani administration was due to the survival of Sawan Mal's system, not to any good qualities of Mulraj. (*Year on the Frontier*, II, 33.) In light of the highly personal and *ad hoc* character of Sawan's administration, this explanation is not entirely convincing.
46. Lieutenant Edward Lake to Currie, 4 August 1848, Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence*, 388.
47. Testimony of Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai, *Trial of Mul Raj*, pp. 34-36, 38.
48. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 381, 390-92.
49. By an odd coincidence Hamilton later became Commissioner of Multan Division, thus in a sense succeeding to the mantle of Diwans Sawan Mal and Mulraj.
50. *Trial of Mul Raj*, pp. 15-24.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **"Place and Wealth and Power": Elite Group Rivalries as a Decisive Factor in the Conquest of Multan, 1848-1849**

"Now that the English were lords of the Punjab, of course he expected us to restore him to his ancient lands."—Remark of a dispossessed Muslim chief to Herbert Edwardes, "Diary of Expedition to Bunnoo with Sikh force commanded by Sirdar Shamsher Singh Sindunwalluh, and General Cortlandt, February 1847," India Office Library, European Manuscripts, English 213/2, Edwardes-Nicholson Collection.

The Multan Campaign, though best remembered for Herbert Edwardes' feats of derring-do, was essentially a power struggle between two local elites. Muslim warrior and religious classes that had been supreme in Multan prior to the Sikh conquest of 1818 were arrayed against Hindu mercantile and official elements that had risen to power under Sikh suzerainty. Although there were other participants, they were present as allies of Multani interest groups. Muslims were assisted by the East India Company (personified by Herbert Edwardes) and Hindus by *Khalsa* warriors.

As observed in Chapter Three the battle for Multan was not initially a Hindu-Muslim square-off. On the contrary, concern for "place and wealth and power" (in Sir Lepel Griffin's pithy phrase) impelled all major local interests, including Muslims, to resist a change of government. Splits quickly appeared in the insurgent ranks, however, when the Muslim soldiery, who had rebelled out of fear of losing their livelihood, discovered they could secure employment under the Company by a timely switch of allegiances. Moreover,



Muslim fighting men and religious notables alike saw that an alliance with the rising British power could lead to the restoration of many of the perquisites they had enjoyed in pre-Sikh days. Thus, the attractions of "place and wealth and power" accounted not only for the initial Hindu-Muslim entente, but also for its subsequent splintering.

## I

This is an opportune place at which to analyze the motives of the three principal groups participating in the insurrection and to indicate where lay the Achilles' Heel of the movement.

Local Hindus comprised the most steadfast partisans of rebellion. Herbert Edwardes aptly diagnosed the revolt as "indeed a Bunyah rebellion with a Sikh insurrection grafted onto it."<sup>1</sup> He was astonished at "these men of the pen buckling on the sword, Moolraj's rebellion has made all the Kuthrees mad."<sup>2</sup> Clearly Edwardes shared the common misconception that Khatris were a "non-martial race" with no business taking up the sword.<sup>3</sup> The Hindu community of Shujabad<sup>4</sup> supplied Mulraj liberally with funds, supplies, and encouragement from the Sastras.<sup>5</sup> According to Edwardes, one *shroff* (banker), "a mean-looking little fellow, undertook to furnish Diwan Moolraj with two months pay for his army, if he would only send them against the Nawab's troops [the Nawab of Bahawalpur's army]."<sup>6</sup> The Hindu citizens of Multan City, "with a zeal for the 'holy war' which rose superior to avarice, tore down their own doors and shutters, and gave them to the soldiers to be erected as traverses on the ramparts."<sup>7</sup> The final assault on the town encountered fierce civilian resistance. Governor-General Dalhousie declared wrathfully that the "rascals were in it heart and hand; and even little boys were caught perched in the trees trying to pot the officers."<sup>8</sup>

The depth of Hindu support for the revolt is understandable since this class had benefited the most from the rule of the Sawan Mal family and stood to lose the most from its downfall. To make clear the stake merchants and bankers had in the existing regime it is necessary to emphasize that no distinction between "public" and "private" sectors existed in this milieu. Instead, government and business interpenetrated each other. It is recorded that the *kardars* of three outlying *taluqas* turned

over their revenue collections to a banker's agent in exchange for bills on the banker. When the bills were presented to the banker at Multan, he paid their cash value into Mulraj's treasury. This banker's commission was stated to be four annas per Rs. 100 of collections,<sup>9</sup> though this appears decidedly small. In addition to being *Nazim*, Mulraj was the largest merchant of Multan City. Except for him, all the great merchants who handled the long-distance caravan trade to which the metropolis owed its prosperity were agents for firms in Hindustan or Sind. The Diwan used his official position to discriminate against these rivals. Consequently, they were hostile to his cause and quit Multan early in the campaign. On the other hand, the resident Hindus, principally small traders and shopkeepers, stood by the *Nazim* because he had favored and patronized them and, doubtless, because they had nowhere else to go.<sup>10</sup>

Self-interest aside, many Hindus were actuated by a genuine loyalty to their *Nazim*. A Company's political officer noted with surprise that the "adherents of Moolraj do not seem to be aware that in fighting with a rebellious master they are fighting against the State, on the contrary they all seem to regard Moolraj, and not the Maharajah, as their legitimate master. The last words of Loonga Mull were, 'this is what I get for my nimak hallallee [loyalty to his salt]'."<sup>11</sup>

Sikhs, though furnishing much of the military muscle for the uprising, did not feel any deep commitment to Mulraj or Multan. Rather, they were impelled by a quasi-nationalistic resentment of British dominance in Punjab and joined Mulraj's revolt because it afforded the best chance then available of striking a blow at the enemy. Hirsute "Singhs" were generally reluctant to accept the leadership of Mulraj, a member of the non-militant Nanakpanthi sect of Sikhism. Efforts were made to bridge this gap. Sikhs of the Multan garrison fastened a *kangna* (steel bracelet of warrior "Singhs") on the Diwan's wrist, in effect adopting him into their brotherhood.<sup>12</sup> A prophecy was discovered in the writings of one of the Gurus that a Khatri named Moolah would restore the *Khalsa* after a period of tribulations.<sup>13</sup> An influential holy man, Bhai Maharaj Singh, invoked this prophecy to rally Sikh support for Mulraj's cause. Unhindered by Durbar officials, the Bhai paraded through the villages of the Manjha "with drums and with an immense retinue" gathering recruits for the rebel Governor.<sup>14</sup>



The divergence of interests between Mulraj and Multani Hindus on one hand and Sikhs on the other was, however, too great to be papered over for long. This split became manifest when Raja Sher Singh, having received a chilly reception from Mulraj, made off to join the main Sikh rebellion in northern Punjab. Many Sikhs of the Multan garrison, who originally had answered the Diwan's summons to a holy war, now followed in the Raja's wake. Even though Sher Singh could not pay as well as Mulraj, their overriding desire was to unite with the main body of the *Khalsa* "to win or die all together."<sup>15</sup>

Multani Pathans constituted the weakest link in the insurgent chain. Although they took up arms as enthusiastically as anyone, they did so for very narrow reasons. Mercenaries who knew no trade but soldiering, the Pathans feared a new administration would have no use for them. On first hearing of the outbreak, Herbert Edwardes concluded:

... the whole disturbance at Mooltan has originated in the dread of the Dewan's Puthan troops of being thrown out of employ. Mooltan was the last asylum left to their class of soldiers, and if discharged thence there is now no Court to which they can resort. In such a position it is quite characteristic of them to mount the stilts of honour and die as becomes Puthans.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, the Pathan warriors would be open to an arrangement which guaranteed them continued employment under new patrons.

## II

Herbert Edwardes has been frequently depicted as a masterful Briton who compelled multitudes of fierce frontier warriors to do his bidding by sheer willpower. In reality Edwardes' relationship with his Muslim cohorts was far more of a two-way street. Powerful Muslim interests threw in with the English officer for very good reasons of their own and gained as much by the connection as did he.

Soon after the beginning of the uprising, the Pathans in Mulraj's service put out peace feelers. Faujdar Khan, Edwardes' trusted lieutenant and a relative of many of the Diwan's Pathan officers, was ideally suited to serve as a go-between in negotiations. Edwardes could well have had

Faujdar in mind when he predicted that the Multani troops would "fight desperately, and die hard, unless a provision is held out to them just before the siege (before the last minute they would not accept it, and only then will they do so with dexterous *vikalut* (diplomacy), carried on by one of their own blood, who knows their points of honour)." <sup>17</sup>

Emma Edwardes ascribed Faujdar Khan's attachment to her husband to "the personal influence which a strong and generous mind (such as this we are studying now) brings to bear upon its work with these brave, untutored races." <sup>18</sup> Be that as may, Faujdar can hardly have failed to see that an alliance with the Company afforded an opportunity to regain the dominance lost by his family and class thirty years before. The Pathan chief was never one to overlook a chance to advance his interests, as witnessed by his letter of condolence to Lady Edwardes on Herbert's death in 1869. After suitable expressions of grief, the missive continued: "your Ladyship's servant with every deference ventures to trust that you will for the sake of our lamented friend and patron, allow your servant to look up to you for the same assistance which it was the wont of that Eminent Person to render us in our troubles and difficulties." <sup>19</sup>

In early May 1848 Mulraj despatched a senior Pathan officer, Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani, as envoy to Edwardes with instructions to ascertain whether the Diwan could expect a fair trial if he surrendered. Unbeknownst to the *Nazim*, however, Ghulam Mustafa also bore a covert commission to negotiate a separate peace for his fellow Pathans. Upon reaching the east bank of the Indus, the emissary sent a message across soliciting an interview with his compatriot Faujdar Khan. Faujdar advised his master that Ghulam Mustafa was a valuable and trusted servant of Mulraj who would only have been sent on an important mission. Edwardes accordingly despatched Faujdar across the river on 8 May with an invitation to the Multani envoy to come to his camp if he had anything of substance to relate. The following day Faujdar returned with Ghulam Mustafa in tow and direct negotiations began. <sup>20</sup>

Ghulam Mustafa led off with a *pro forma* statement of his master's case. The emissary obtained Edwardes' assurances of a fair trial for Mulraj, though there is no certainty he ever transmitted them to the Diwan. Ghulam Mustafa now got down to the real business at hand, asserting that the flare-up



in which Vans Agnew and Anderson perished had been the work of Hindus from beginning to end. He disclosed that the Pathan troops were prepared to quit Mulraj's service and observe neutrality in the struggle if guaranteed honorable employment under the Company and a hearing for their claims to certain estates allegedly stolen with the connivance of Sawan Mal a generation previously. They could not, however, take up arms against their erstwhile master because this would be dishonorable.<sup>21</sup> Edwardes gave Ghulam Mustafa a written pledge of life, honor, maintenance, and adjudication of land claims for all Pathans forsaking Mulraj.<sup>22</sup>

While not totally accepting the Pathans' claims of non-involvement, Edwardes justified his bargain on the grounds that, "the guilt of our countrymen's blood was upon the Sikh and Hindoo portion of the garrison, and that the Pathans had contributed no more towards the rebellion than they could now counterbalance by their defection."<sup>23</sup> According to the political officer, the Pathans had little heart for the revolt and several of their leaders, including Ghulam Mustafa, had refused to swear fidelity to the insurgent cause on the *Koran*.<sup>24</sup> If Ghulam Mustafa had refused to swear allegiance, it was indeed surprising that Mulraj entrusted him with so vital a diplomatic errand. Edwardes' abrupt about-face, at least for the public record, from his initial conclusions about the major role of Pathan mercenaries in the rebellion was doubtless motivated by political expediency. As a lone Englishman on the doorstep of a hostile province (he likened himself to a Scotch terrier yapping at a tiger) Edwardes could not afford to be too choosy about accepting allies.

Edwardes' *Realpolitik* paid off handsomely at the decisive engagement of Kineyre (18 July 1848). Mulraj's Pathan cavalry held studiously aloof from the fray while his Sikh and Gurkha infantry were decimated. According to local tradition the Pathans wore tamarisk branches in their turbans as a signal to Edwardes' men that they were friends. After Kineyre the *Nazim's* Pathans defected *en masse* and openly enlisted under Edwardes' banner. Nothing more was said about how honor forbade them from fighting against the man whose salt they had eaten. Manifestly, the Pathans' prior fence-sitting had been dictated by a concern to see whom the fortunes of war would favor before committing themselves irrevocably. If Kineyre had turned out differently, the Multani Pathans could still

have proved their fealty to Mulraj by falling on the retreating foe. By mid-July all save two Muslim leaders had abandoned the Diwan. The defectors, conspicuous among whom was Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani, included representatives of all the chief clans of Multani Pathans: Khakwanis, Badozais, Sadozais, Tarins, and Babars.<sup>25</sup>

Next to Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani, Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai, who had held high office under both Sawan Mal and Mulraj, was the most prominent of the Pathan deserters. His equivocal conduct during the early stages of the revolt admirably illustrates the trimming policy of the Multani Pathans as a class. In testimony at the trial of Mulraj, Sadiq Muhammad claimed to have refused to swear loyalty to the rebel *Nazim*. He admitted under cross-examination, however, to remaining in the Multan service for two months after outbreak of the rebellion and accompanying a force despatched against Herbert Edwardes. The Badozai chief maintained that he intended to defect all along but had to wait till his *zanana* reached safely in Bahawalpur.<sup>26</sup>

Pathan defectors were of substantial assistance to the Company's forces during the remainder of the campaign. At one point it was deemed vital to dam the mouths of the numerous canals around Multan City lest Mulraj drown out the besiegers by breaking the levees at high water season (July and August). After regular military engineers failed at this task, Ghulam Mustafa Khan, a noted irrigation expert, was called in and succeeded.<sup>27</sup> Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai made accurate sketches of Multan's suburbs which contributed materially to the success of an assault.<sup>28</sup>

In reporting the defection of Mulraj's Pathans after Kineyre, when the campaign still had many months to run, Herbert Edwardes gave a hint of future policy towards the Muslim warrior classes: 'I have treated them all kindly; admire their race (as natives go); and shall be glad when these troubles subside to see them entertained in a body as a Musulman check upon Sikh disaffection.'<sup>29</sup>

### III

The Muslim religious leadership of Multan, as well as the warrior classes, came to an understanding with Herbert



Edwardes. Whereas the power of the military element rested on the sword, the strength of the *pirs* derived from the less tangible but nonetheless potent quality of spiritual power (*barkat*). Being hereditary, *barkat* could be wielded by descendants of revered *pirs* of old who themselves had no pretensions to saintliness.

Shah Mahmud Qureshi, *Mukhdum* (custodian) of the Bahawal Haq and Rukn-i-Alm shrines, stood preeminent among the *pirs* of Multan City. At the time of the First Afghan War it was reported that Bahawal Haq was the most revered *pir* of Sind, Baluchistan, and Punjab, and that his tomb also attracted pilgrims from the remotest parts of Khorasan (i.e. Afghanistan) and India.<sup>30</sup> Given the hereditary nature of *barkat*, much of this saint's prestige had rubbed off on his descendant Shah Mahmud. Shah Mahmud assisted the Company during the Multan campaign though details are sketchy.<sup>31</sup> Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani evidently served as a channel of communications between the *Mukhdum* and Herbert Edwardes, for a letter from the Pathan to the political officer contained a postscript that Shah Mahmud sent his salaams. While this could have been mere name-dropping, the *Mukhdum* was subsequently credited with furnishing intelligence to the Company's forces as well as rendering other valuable though unspecified services.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, the position of the family shrines within the citadel itself would have afforded Shah Mahmud ample opportunity to gather intelligence. Furthermore, it is not unlikely that he used his influence to induce Mulraj's Muslim troops to switch sides. Herbert Edwardes remarked in another connection that, "the ultra-Muhammadan races on the Indus" deemed Multan Fort impregnable by virtue of "the charm shed over it by . . . the sacred shrines of Shah Rookn Alum and Bhawul Huk."<sup>33</sup> The promptings of these saints' earthly representative would therefore have carried considerable weight with the Muslim soldiery.

In perusing the official records, one cannot help being struck by the vague nature of the services attributed to religious figures such as Shah Mahmud Qureshi. By contrast, the contributions of military chiefs in the form of contingents of fighting men and distinguished conduct in particular engagements are set forth in great detail. The most probable explanation for this anomaly is that the *pirs'* power was rooted in their hold over the imaginations of men, which does not lend itself easily

to quantitative analysis. A sceptic might have been tempted to remark "how many divisions has Bahawal Haq?," but such sceptics sometimes have been rudely surprised. After all, how many divisions did Ayatollah Khomeni have at the outset? To the Company, as to its Sikh predecessors, the keepers of the shrines were evidently something of an enigma—one it was more politic to mildly propitiate than to directly challenge.

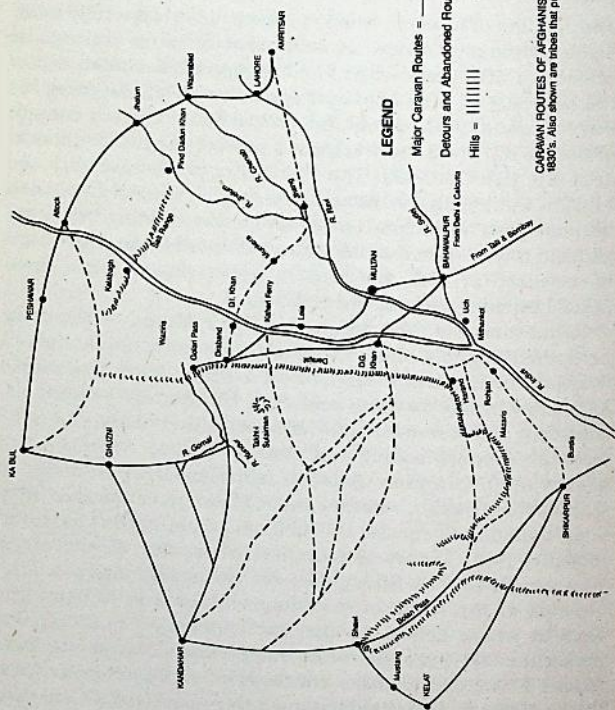
#### IV

The conduct of Multan's Muslim elites in 1848 is not fully intelligible without a review of communal relations during the previous thirty years when Hindus controlled Multan under the umbrella of Sikh military superiority. While favoring his own community, the politic Sawan Mal had doled out enough of the pie of "place and wealth and power" to Muslim elites to keep the latter pacified. The Diwan's *rapprochement* with the Muslim leadership was nonetheless fragile, since it depended ultimately on the circumstance that he was running "the only game in town." When a viable alternative to Hindu supremacy materialized in 1848, the Muslim upper classes, after some initial hesitancy, aligned themselves with it.

Unquestionably, the long-submerged Hindu community prospered mightily under the Khatri Governors while the old Muslim ruling classes suffered an eclipse. Having perforce kept a low profile for many centuries, Hindus now waxed self-confident and assertive. Sikh-held towns were observed to be more prosperous-looking and cleaner because, "the Hindus, always the principal inhabitants, felt themselves at liberty to display their wealth, whereas under Mahomedan masters they were studious to conceal it."<sup>34</sup> Nanakpanthi Sikhs converted mosques into Gurdwaras (temples) where the *Granth Sahib* was venerated.<sup>35</sup> A Sikh priest set up headquarters on the veranda of the shrine of *pir* Shams-i-Tabrez at Multan (the saint at whose behest the sun had descended to scorch his persecutors).<sup>36</sup> Even the semi-independent Nawab of Dera Ismael Khan had to make concessions to Sikh sensibilities. When Sikh officers visited the town they exhibited a *Granth* at their lodgings and "many of the Banyas were accustomed to attend and read it, which they always did aloud."<sup>37</sup>

A notable instance of Hindus racking up gains at the expense





CARAVAN ROUTES OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE INDUS VALLEY IN THE 1830's. Also shown are tribes that preyed on caravans.

of their former overlords occurred in the old Pathan domains around Multan City. Prior to the Sikh conquest the Pathan nobles had been absentee *zamindars* ("superior proprietors" in later British nomenclature), who dwelt in Multan City at the court of their Nawab. These absentees entrusted the cultivation of their lands to Muslim Jats and the collection of their rents to Hindu village accountants (*patwaris*).<sup>38</sup> After the fall of Multan the Pathan chiefs fled the country. They left their holdings in the custody of the *patwaris* and tenants, who pledged to continue forwarding the rents. When harvest time came round again, the absconders sent agents back to collect their dues. The accountants and cultivators, however, flatly refused to disgorge, and cut short discussions by warning their unwelcome visitors to "fly for God's sake or the Sikhs would murder them." Even though many Pathans eventually drifted back to Multan and secured an order from Maharaja Ranjit Singh for the restoration of their estates, the *de facto* holders bribed local officials to ignore the edict.<sup>39</sup>

The foregoing account, derived in after years from the Multani Pathans themselves, revealed them to have been an unproductive class of revenue absorbers, devoid of local roots. Having lost political power, they were easily dealt out of the picture unmourned by anyone with the possible exception of the religious leaders they had patronized. It should be emphasized that the dispossession of these Pathans was hardly a straight Hindu-Muslim struggle since many Muslim Jats also became landholders as a result.<sup>40</sup>

Hindu merchants and bankers benefited greatly from the peace and order established by the Khatri rulers. For centuries Hindus from South-West Punjab and Sind had been active in the caravan trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia. During the First Afghan War Company Sepoy Sita Ram came across:

... many Hindu merchants in Kandahar who had forgotten even when their ancestors had arrived there. We were all surprised by this, but a merchant will go wherever he can cheat. We found them afterwards in Ghazni and Kabul, and I have heard that some of them have even penetrated into the land of the Russians.<sup>41</sup>

Prior to the Sikh occupation of Multan, Shikarpur in northern Sind had been the base for Hindu commercial enterprise in lands west of the Indus. Unlike Multan City, which exported fine silk and cotton textiles, Shikarpur was almost exclusively a



banking center. Drafts on Shikarpur banking houses could be cashed at branch banks from Calcutta to Astracan on the Caspian Sea. This network of credit was of vital importance in overland trade since it relieved travellers of the need to carry gold and silver through bandit-infested regions. Shikarpur's heyday had come in the latter half of the eighteenth century as the Durrani empire, to which it belonged, waxed strong. At that time Hindus flocked to the Sindhi town from Multan City, which was suffering from the decay of the Mughal realm. With the collapse of Durrani power and emergence of a commercially-oriented regime in Multan Province, Multan City again came to the fore and drew Hindus back from Shikarpur.<sup>42</sup>

From the standpoint of the erstwhile Muslim ruling classes, the most galling aspect of Sikh hegemony was simply that Hindus wielded political power. True, Hindu subordinates had long used their mastery of accounting and orderly business habits to manipulate and bilk Muslim overlords. Nonetheless, the sight of despised "dhoti-wearing Kirars"<sup>43</sup> openly in the driver's seat was quite without precedent. Hindu and Sikh political supremacy manifested itself in religious garb. The Muslim call to prayer (*âzan*), recitation of Muslim prayers aloud, and slaughter of cattle were proscribed.<sup>44</sup> In 1831 a visitor was struck by the fact that at Multan City,

... which held for upwards of 800 years, so high a Mahomedan supremacy, there is now no public 'numaz'; the true believer dare not lift his voice in public. The Eeds and the Mohurram pass without the usual observances; the 'Ullaho Acbar' of the priest is never heard; the mosques are yet frequented, but the pious are reduced to offering up their orisons in silence.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the Hindu upsurge, Sawan Mal took pains to placate once-dominant Muslim elements. Large numbers of the bellicose Multani Pathans were incorporated into the provincial army, which consisted of eight Mussalman battalions as against just two of Sikhs. Pathan chiefs sometimes held high office. Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai led many campaigns against Baluchis on the Derajat frontier and served as *kardar* of Kamalia (in later Montgomery District), an area where a strong hand was needed to keep down unruly pastoral tribes.<sup>46</sup> Muslim religious dignitaries did not fare as well at Sawan Mal's hands as did fighting men. The Governor's determination to reduce useless expenditures on *jagirs* and other grants

to a minimum cut into the emoluments of *pirs*.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, the Diwan was careful not to drive the religious leaders to the wall. They were left in possession not only of part of their grants but also of the shrines of their sainted ancestors, the custodianship of which was highly profitable.

Even though military and religious elites were taken down a few pegs, the bulk of the Muslim community was not adversely affected by Hindu and Sikh dominance. Apart from the religious disabilities mentioned above, Multan City's Muslims suffered no inconvenience and their trading activities were fully protected. Since 4 or 500 Sikh soldiers sufficed to hold a city containing some 40,000 Muslims (out of an estimated total population of 60,000), Muslims apparently found the Khatri regime endurable.<sup>48</sup> Sawan Mal's government was "well-spoken of by the Lohani [Afghan] merchants; who gave him an excellent character for justice in his dealings with them."<sup>49</sup>

Hindu and Sikh religious policies do not appear to have generated any groundswell of indignation among the Muslim populace at large. Sawan Mal was reportedly liberal and indulgent in religious matters.<sup>50</sup> In any case, restrictions on formal Islamic observances did not strike at the cult of saints which lay at the heart of popular Islam. Jats conscripted to haul the boats of a British envoy up the Chenab were forbidden to pray aloud, "but they stimulated each other when pressed in our service by loud shouts and invocations to Bhawul Huq, the revered saint of Mooltan."<sup>51</sup> The rulers were canny enough not to interfere with homage to the saint, one prohibition that might have stirred up a popular uprising.

A Hindu-Muslim *modus vivendi* was made possible by the circumstance that the two communities had lived together and interreacted for generations.<sup>52</sup> Possibly as a form of protective coloration, Hindus had adopted many Muslim customs. In 1808 the *Diwan* (prime minister) of Bahawalpur was observed to look and speak "more like a Persian Moolah than a Hindoo."<sup>53</sup> Hindu women wore the tent-like *burqa* characteristic of their Muslim sisters. Popular Hinduism and popular Islam overlapped to a considerable extent. Members of the two communities freely patronized one another's fairs and shrines.<sup>54</sup> One such instance of eclecticism was reported by a visitor in Multan City in 1835. On 11 April the Hindu *Baisakh* (spring festival) was celebrated in the morning, the towns-



people going down to the Chenab three miles away to bathe. In the afternoon a fair was held in the garden of the shrine of *faqir* Ali Akbar. In attendance were Hindus distinguishable by their caste marks, rose-colored turbans, and flowing red trousers; Multani Muslims clad in garments similar to the Hindus' but white in color; and Sikh soldiers dressed in scanty turbans and knee breeches or close-fitting trousers and bearing swords and matchlocks. Lohani Afghan merchants were "conspicuous, by reason of the snake-like folds of their turbans, and by their dark, swarthy, and manly features beneath them."<sup>55</sup> Many Hindus venerated Muslim saints. Mulraj's mother made offerings at the shrine of Bahawal Haq, praying "that her son might not only conquer the English, but afterwards the Sikhs and become *King* of the Punjab."<sup>56</sup>

After giving all due credit to Sawan Mal's statesmanship, one must acknowledge that the balance of interests he achieved was precarious in the extreme. Pathans resented the loss of political supremacy and its concomitant privileges. Their service *jagirs* had been resumed and replaced by cash salaries, thus making them more dependent on the pleasure of the rulers.<sup>57</sup> Religious notables were indignant over subjection to infidels and the curtailment of *jagirs* and pensions. Discontent with Hindu rule was greatest around Multan City, where the Muslim secular and religious elite was concentrated. In 1835 a Kashmiri pandit in the Company's employ found people near the town sympathetic towards Shah Shuja, a dethroned Afghan ruler thought to have designs on Multan.<sup>58</sup>

The Muslim elite was obliged to acquiesce in Hindu dominance for want of a feasible alternative. Rebellion would have brought down the *Khalsa* host with fire and sword. Flight would have been equally impracticable because neither Pathans nor *pirs* could quit Multan without abandoning their means of livelihood.

Multani Pathans made a living by government service as soldiers or administrators. They clearly preferred to serve Muslim overlords. Following the Sikh conquest of Multan, large numbers of Pathans entered the employ of neighboring Muslim princes such as the Nawabs of Mankera and Bahawalpur. By 1831 however the burgeoning Sikh empire had swallowed up all south-western Punjab save that portion of Bahawalpur lying east of the Sutlej. Faced with a choice between forsaking the ancestral homeland altogether and

working for a Hindu regime, most Pathans chose the latter. Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani for example entered the Multani administration after losing a situation in Bahawalpur State.<sup>59</sup>

The *pirs* of Multan had given weighty "hostages to fortune." These "hostages" consisted of the tombs (*dargahs*) of their saintly forebears, which generated a sizable income in the form of pilgrims' offerings, as well as numerous *jagirs* and pensions conferred by the state. These sources of revenue were non-portable and at the mercy of the government. Although descended from Sufis who disdained worldly possessions, the *pir* families had long been members of the religious establishment accustomed to comfortable life styles. Consequently, no *mukhdums* elected to flee to the hills and preach *jihad*.<sup>60</sup>

The advent of the East India Company presented Muslim elites with an opportunity to regain much of their former wealth and position by throwing their support behind an up-and-coming power. In all probability the Muslim leaders' decision to seize this opportunity was influenced by prior friendly contacts with British officials and reports of the Company's policy of religious toleration, which had worked to the advantage of Muslims in the rest of Punjab.

British contacts with prominent Muslims in south-west Punjab antedated the First Sikh War by some years. In 1839 A.C. Gordon, a political agent assigned to purchase and forward grain for the British army of occupation in Afghanistan, was struck by the enormous respect accorded *pirs*. He proposed therefore to enlist the good offices of the Bahawal Haq shrine *Mukhdum* to shield grain convoys from Waziri Pathan attack in the Sulaiman passes. The current incumbent, Shah Mahmud Qureshi, and his recently retired father, Shah Hussein, readily agreed to cast the mantle of their spiritual authority over grain shipments. Shah Hussein undertook to approach the formidable Waziris through a personal friend of his, Allahadad Khan of Tonk, who was married to a Waziri and whose word carried weight with the tribe. Upon being expelled from Tonk by the Sikhs, Allahadad had taken refuge with the Waziris whose code of honor required them to shelter a guest in distress. Subsequently, he had joined them in forays against the Sikhs.<sup>61</sup>

Shah Hussein and his son, while not asking directly for a *quid pro quo*, let it be known that they would welcome the



Company's protection against the encroachments of Sawan Mal. The Governor had resumed several *jagirs* belonging to the shrine and allegedly had intended to transfer the *gadi* (throne of a ruler or *pir*) to another branch of the family on the death of *Mukhdum* Shah Hussein. To forestall this Shah Hussein had abdicated in favor of his son.<sup>62</sup> Gordon recommended that the government of India bestow some title of honor upon the *pirs*, thus deterring Sawan Mal without overt interference in Multani internal affairs. In his travels the political agent had observed that "natives of consequence in foreign Indian states, eagerly courted marks of distinction from the Government of India, which they consider as securing them against oppression from their own immediate rulers." Gordon also sought authorization to pay up to Rs. 20,000 in protection money to the Waziris.<sup>63</sup>

The Governor-General emphatically ordered the political agent not to take the part of the *pirs* against the Governor of Multan, "the consequences of which would induce serious political embarrassment in our relations with the Government of Lahore." Gordon was further enjoined not to enter into relations with Allahabad Khan and the Waziris. A display of friendship with open enemies of the Sikh Kingdom, an ally of British India, would be even more inexpedient than extending protection to the *pirs* of Multan. The agent was told to confine himself to purchasing grain.<sup>64</sup> Even though aborted, Gordon's design for an alliance with holy men and frontier warriors curiously foreshadowed the coalition that brought down Mulraj a decade later.

Following the First Sikh War, the Lahore Residency softened or abolished disabilities against Muslims in the Sikh Kingdom (excepting semi-autonomous Multan Province). The Sikh authorities had punished kine killing with death. Without bothering with a trial, *Khalsa* soldiers had been wont to massacre the inhabitants of the village or neighborhood where bovicide was rumored. In the early days of the Residency there were several instances of cow slaughter by Muslims who apparently thought the practice was now legal as in British India. Under strong pressure from the Durbar, Resident Henry Lawrence issued a proclamation against kine-killing in April 1847, but failed to specify the penalty. Assessment of the punishment for each offense was left to local Lahore State officials, who in practice were guided by the nearest Resident's

Assistant. The severest sentences were meted out by George Lawrence at Peshawar, who punished several Muslim cow killers by life imprisonment and demolition of their homes. Even this was insufficient for one *Khalsa* officer who exclaimed, "See what justice Major Lawrence has done: the religion of the Sikhs is destroyed."<sup>65</sup> Other Assistants were considerably milder than George Lawrence and the absence of uniform penalties gave Muslims the impression that the company's servants were not in earnest regarding the sanctity of kine. Accordingly, cow slaughter continued. After demands from the Durbar that definite penalties be set, Acting Resident John Lawrence in January 1848 decreed kine-killing to be punishable by one to seven years imprisonment. This was far from satisfactory to the Durbar, which had pressed for death or life imprisonment.<sup>66</sup>

As Acting-Resident John Lawrence compelled a reluctant Durbar to lift a long-standing ban on the call of the *muzzein*. Although John first broached the matter in August 1847, the Durbar delayed compliance till December. Its members contended that, "the religion of the Hindoos will be held in contempt and that people will deride them for giving permission to make the Call, which has been prohibited for the last 80 years."<sup>67</sup> Finding the Acting-Resident unmoved, the Durbar gave way. An ominous portent of future communal strife soon appeared: "the Moosulmans and Hindoos see which can make the most noise in their calls for prayers, the Hindoos blowing the shell when they hear the *uzan* and *vice versa*."<sup>68</sup>

Disputes over cow killing and the *âzan* rested squarely on political bases. Sikhs resisted removing restrictions on Islam because this betokened a loss of *Khalsa* dominion. Muslims, interpreting the lifting of disabilities as an omen of the end of the Sikh Raj, hastened to seek redress of past wrongs from the evident new overlords. At Khushab in western Punjab a Baluchi chieftain, Jowahir Khan, informed Herbert Edwardes that now that the British were in charge he expected them to restore his ancestral holdings. Edwardes pointed out that Jowahir had lost his domains in fair fight. In any case, "If we once commenced restoring lands to their original holders, we must ourselves take ship for England." The political officer's presence "emboldened the Musselmen of Khoosahb to proclaim their hour of prayer & celebrate as it were high mass. The consequence naturally was that some beards were pulled out



by the roots, and then they come to me for redress—for justice." Edwardes concluded, "We have a difficult part to play between the oppressed Musselmen and the oppressing Sikhs. The former excite our pity now that they are in distress; but listen to their sentiments, and you are convinced that if tomorrow they had the power they would be oppressors themselves."<sup>69</sup> This observation of Edwardes would appear both traditionally and prophetically sagacious. Philosophically, *Khalsa* and Muslim gazed through opposite portholes in time.

## V

It must be stressed that the Multan Campaign was primarily a contest between small elites for political and economic power.<sup>70</sup> Although the rival elites were of different religious affiliations, the struggle was not a religious war.

At first glance the campaign wore the coloration of a religious war. By July 1848 the bulk of Mulraj's Muslim troops had gone over to Edwardes while the *Nazim* had been joined by many Sikh volunteers responding to his call for a holy war. Thus, an army of Muslims faced one of Sikhs and Hindus. Expressions of religious antipathy were rife. Ghulam Mustafa Khan remarked sarcastically to Edwardes: "Moolraj has asked for a fair trial, but he will hardly accept it. After all what is he? A Hindoo. And did you ever know a Hindoo who had the magnanimity to throw himself on the honour of an enemy."<sup>71</sup> A Baluchi bard depicted the struggle as a *jihad*:

Forth from Gawen marched the army to the roll of kettledrums. The roll of the drums of the Faith was made to be heard in all lands.<sup>72</sup>

Sikh insurgents at Multan proclaimed, "there will be no more cow-killing, and our holy religion will prosper. . . . Gird up your loins, and Govind Sing will preserve his sanctity."<sup>73</sup> Disaffected Sikh soldiers at Bannu visited a mosque and "tried to interrupt and molest the *Muzzein* in the performance of his office by cries of 'Wah Gooroo, Akal, Akal, &c.'"

A deeper analysis discloses that, despite the prevalence of religious slogans and epithets, religious motives were not paramount. The Muslim populace of Multan did not rise *en masse* against the Hindu regime. The Jat agriculturists who

constituted an overwhelming majority of the Muslim community wanted no part of hostilities and dutifully paid revenue to whoever appeared in their vicinity with troops.<sup>75</sup> "Here it is amusing, Edwardes is powerful, he puts in his kardars and draws the revenue. Moolraj gets out and puts back his own kardars and then he gets the revenue."<sup>76</sup> Only the tiny Pathan and Baluchi military classes took up arms. Even they did not leap into the fray until a definite trend in the Company's favor was evident.

It must not be thought that Islamic zeal burned more fiercely in "martial" Pathans and Baluchis than in "non-martial" Jats. Pathans and Baluchis domiciled in Multan Province east of the Indus were, as has been seen, concerned with regaining their former position. Pathans and Baluchis from the Frontier itself were mercenaries whose swords were at the disposal of the highest bidder, always provided there was a fair prospect of success. Edwardes stated explicitly that if he had not hastened to sign up available Muslim mercenaries in the Derajat they would willingly have taken service with the rebels. So long as his cause prospered, Mulraj experienced no difficulty in attracting Muslim recruits from the Frontier. At one time he reportedly contemplated abandoning Multan, leading his forces across the Indus, and carving out a kingdom in the hills. Edwardes judged this scheme to be perfectly feasible for, provided the Diwan had ample treasure, all the tribes would rally to him. The political officer considered it necessary to conquer Dera Ghazi Khan District in order to stem the flow of Muslim swords to Mulraj.<sup>77</sup>

Events in Dera Ghazi Khan District defied explanation in terms of Hindu-Muslim strife. Lagharis and Khosas, the principal Baluchi tribes, were traditional enemies. Sawan Mal had shown the Lagharis great favor and employed them as a counterpoise to other tribes. To increase the Lagharis' dependence upon him, the Diwan had stirred up strife between them and their neighbors. For their part the Khosas had become persistent enemies of the Multan authorities, doubtless because their Laghari rivals were in favor.<sup>78</sup> Predictably, in 1848 the Lagharis sided with Mulraj's kardars, Langa Mal and Cheytun Mal, while the Khosas took arms for Edwardes and put their ancient foes to flight. Although Edwardes praised Khosa "loyalty," local rivalries determined the two tribes' actions.<sup>79</sup>



Jockeying by local elites for "place and wealth and power" was at the root of both the Multan rebellion and its collapse. On the eve of the uprising, Hindu officials and merchants, Sikh soldiers, and Muslim warriors and religious leaders co-existed in uneasy symbiosis within a framework of provincial autonomy. The Khatri Governors had executed a delicate balancing act among a Muslim power structure resentful at displacement from political preeminence, a native Hindu community, and the Lahore authorities. The presence of a Sikh garrison and the threat of the main *Khalsa* army deterred Muslims from rebellion. Needing local backing against the central government, the provincial *Nazims* were obliged to show consideration for Muslim interests. Since Muslims could not hope to regain control of Multan, they preferred the Khatri regime to direct rule by Lahore. Thus, the Governors held Muslims in check with the power of the Lahore government, while utilizing their command of Muslim support to keep the center at arm's length. With Sikhs and Muslims neutralizing one another, Multani Hindus were the effective rulers and employed political power to enhance an already-strong economic position.

In April 1848 Multani elites banded together to oppose subjection to central authority. Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims alike felt their prestige and well-being to depend upon preservation of provincial autonomy. Nonetheless, cleavages among the insurgents soon appeared as a result of divergent interests and identities. Local Hindus comprised the most zealous backers of the revolt since they would lose the most by defeat. Sikhs, though eager to cross swords with the *feringis*, regarded Multan as a sideshow in a battle for the Land of Five Rivers and in the course of the rebellion drifted away to the main theater of action in the north. Pathan warriors revolted at the prospect of being thrown out of work, but nursed no particular ill-will against the British. Once assured of employment and a hearing for old land claims, they hastened to transfer their allegiance to the Company. *Pirs* also favored the new regime, expecting it to

sanction calling to prayer and cow slaughter and to bend a sympathetic ear to petitions for restoration of *jagirs* and pensions. While the appeal of the Company's regime of religious tolerance cannot be gainsaid, material considerations were primarily responsible for the Muslim elite's abandonment of Diwan Mulraj.

## NOTES

1. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 333.
2. *Ibid.*, II, 243.
3. A more discerning contemporary of Edwardes noted that Khatri frequently took up martial pursuits and that Ranjit Singh's best General, Hari Singh Nalwa, was of that caste. See, Joseph Davey Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 13.
4. Shujabad was the second most important town in Multan District after Multan City. Situated in the southern portion of the District, it capitulated to Edwardes shortly after his victory at Kineyre.
5. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 333.
6. Edwardes to Resident, 21 June 1848, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 230. This Croesus was evidently one of the Babla Chaudris, the premier money-lending and land-holding family of Shujabad. See, *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, p. 67.
7. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 520.
8. Letter of 5 January 1849, J.G.A. Baird (ed.), *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie* (London, 1910), p. 51.
9. Testimony of Sham Singh, *Trial of Mul Raj*, pp. 128, 130.
10. IOR, India Secret Proceedings (1849), Vol. 160, Consultation No. 33 of 25 August 1849. Mulraj possibly favored his own commercial activities and those of his community by levying lower transit duties on the goods of Hindu merchants than on those of Muslims. His father had been accused of such a practice. See, Mohan Lal, *Travels in the Punjab, Afghanistan, and Turkistan, to Balkh, Bokhara, and Herat; and a Visit to Great Britain and Germany* (Patiala, 1971), pp. 404-05. First published 1846.
11. Edward Lake to Currie, 4 August 1848, Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence*, p. 338.
12. Testimony of Tulsi Ram, *Trial of Mul Raj*, p. 112.
13. Entry of 19 May 1848, Reynell Taylor's *Political Diaries, Assistants' Political Diaries*, p. 158.
14. Resident Currie to Government of India, 13 June 1848, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, pp. 210-11.
15. Herbert Edwardes to Currie, 11 October 1848, Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence*, p. 291.
16. Entry of 24 April 1848, *Edwardes' Political Diaries*, p. 320.
17. Edwardes to Currie, 25 April 1848, *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 81.
18. Emma Edwardes, *Memorials of Edwardes*, II, 156.
19. Faujdar Khan of Dera Ismael Khan to Lady Edwardes, 31 January 1869



- (trans. by H.B. Urmiston), IOL, European Mss., English 212/1, Edwardes-Nicholson Collection.
20. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 155-56.
  21. Entry of 8 May 1848, *Edwardes' Political Diaries*, p. 321. Edwardes to Currie, 10 May 1848, National Archives of India, Gol Foreign (Secret) Proceedings, No 167(A) of 7 Oct. 1848.
  22. Currie to Edwardes, 18 May 1848, NAI, Gol For. (Sec.) Procds., No. 168(A) of 7 Oct., 1848. IOR, India Political Consultations (1850), Range 198, Vol. 67, No. 19 of 18 Feb. 1850.
  23. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 160.
  24. *Ibid.*, II, 157.
  25. Edwardes to Currie, 13 July 1848, Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence*, 236-37. They also included a Baluchi chief, Muhammad Asad Khan Nutkani.
  26. Testimony of Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai, *Trial of Mul Raj*, pp. 38-39.
  27. IOR, Board of Control's Collections, Vol. 2386, 1849-50, Collection in 33 vols. (Nos. 127, 257-87, 289) to Political Dept. Draft No. 916 to 1850, VIII, 13-16.
  28. *Ibid.*, VIII, 44-45
  29. Edwardes to Currie, 13 July 1848, Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence*, pp. 236-37.
  30. NAI, Gol Foreign (Secret) Consultations, No. 81(A) of 2 Oct. 1839.
  31. Representatives of the other two principal *pir* families of Multan City, the Gardezis and Gilaris, also aided the Company at this time.
  32. IOR, India Political Cons. (1850), Range 199, Vol. 14, Nos. 44, 45, and 46 of 4 Oct. 1850.
  33. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 16.
  34. Charles Masson, *Various Journeys*, I, 30.
  35. Alexander Burnes, *Cabool: a Personal Narrative of a Journey to, and Residence in that City, in the Years 1836, 7, and 8* (London, 1843) p. 110.
  36. Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, III, 117-18.
  37. C. Masson, *Various Journeys*, I, 46-47. A Sikh envoy happening to be present at the time of Holi (a riotous Hindu spring festival), the Nawab was constrained to permit Hindus to celebrate openly for the first time and even presented his Hindu mercenaries with Rs. 200 for merry-making, asking only that they keep away from the fort out of respect for his aged mother.
  38. The office of *patwari* (frequently styled weighman (*dabir*) because at harvest time he weighed out the shares of grain due to various parties) was often quite lucrative. In 1902 several of the largest landholding families in Multan District were said to owe the foundation of their fortunes to the profits of *dabiri*. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, p. 187.
  39. Translation of petition from Faujdar Khan, Bahadur, IOR, India Political Cons., 1850, Range 198, Vol. 67, No. 20 of 15 Feb. 1850.
  40. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 15.
  41. Sita Ram, *From Sepoy to Subedar. Being the life and adventures of Subedar Sita Ram, a Native Officer of the Bengal Army written and related by himself*, James Lunt ed., (London, 1970), p. 91. Translated and first published by Lieutenant-Colonel Norgate, Bengal Staff Corps, Lahore, 1873

42. A. Burnes, *Cabool*, pp. 53-59. C. Masson, *Various Journeys*, I, 354-55.
43. The Baluchi author of a ballad of the Multan Campaign used the term "dhoti-wearing Kirar" as if it were the ultimate insult. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, Appendix I.
44. Masson, *Various Journeys*, I, 37. The Sikhs imposed these restrictions in all the territories under their sway. Sikhs and Hindus were in accord on such issues as the sacredness of cattle.
45. Burnes, *Bokhara*, III, 118.
46. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 99, 392.
47. *Multan Gazetteer*, [1923-24, Pt. A, p. 50.
48. Burnes, *Bokhara*, III, 118-19.
49. Godfrey Thomas Vigne, *A Visit to Ghuzni*, p. 23.
50. Masson, *Various Journeys*, I, 398.
51. Burnes, *Bokhara*, III, 123.
52. Although not a Multani himself, Sawan Mal came from Gujranwala District, another Muslim majority area. His caste, the Khattris, had been heavily influenced by Islamic culture in the course of government service under Muslim dynasties. One of Sawan's nephews, Ram Sarup, converted to Islam, taking the name Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din.
53. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Caubul*, I, 22.
54. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, p. 117.
55. G.T. Vigne, *A Visit to Ghuzni*, pp. 24-25.
56. Edwardes to Currie, 24 August, 1848, Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence*, p. 256.
57. Burnes, *Bokhara*, III, 121.
58. Report of Munshi Mohan Lal, Poor Traveller, to Lieut. F. Mackeson, British Agent, Multan, 30 January 1836, NAI, Gol Foreign Political Procds., No 42(A) of 9 May, 1836.
59. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 381.
60. Like the Sufis of late Seventeenth-Century Bijapur, the Sufis of Multan had been transformed into a landed elite, integrated into the Islamic establishment and dependent upon state patronage. For the Sufis of Bijapur, see Richard Maxwell Eaton, *The Sufis of Bijapur, 1300-1700* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972), pp. 210-13.
61. A.C. Gordon, Assistant Political Agent on Deputation to Dera Ismael Khan, to Government of India, Leia, 7 July 1839, NAI, Foreign (Secret) Consultations, No. 81(A) of 2 Oct. 1839.
62. Shah Hussein's anxiety lest the provincial ruler name a successor to his *gadi* illustrated the extent to which Multani *pirs* had become subservient to the state. Like Bijapuri Sufis, their Multani counterparts had forfeited independence upon accepting *inams* (grants of revenue-free land). Governments acquired the power of regulating the succession as a corollary of the right to determine who inherited *inams*.
63. *Ibid.*, No. 81(A) of 2 Oct. 1839.
64. Gol to Gordon, Simla, 22 July 1839, *Ibid.*, No. 82(A) of 2 Oct. 1839.
65. Entry of 16 April 1847, *Resident's Political Diaries*, p. 104. See also, Maj. George St Patrick Lawrence, Assistant Resident, to Resident, Peshawar, 4 April 1847, "Parliamentary Papers, Punjab," PP(1849), Cmd. 1071, p. 41.



66. Entries for 27 and 29 January 1848, *Resident's Political Diaries*, 435-37.
67. Entries of 4, 5, 12, 19, and 22 September, 23 November, 2 and 7 December 1847, *Ibid.*, pp. 249, 275, 279, 287, 292, 294, 359, 371, 372, 373, 378.
68. Entry of 30 December 1847, *Ibid.*, 405.
69. "Diary of Expedition to Bunnoo with Sikh force commanded by Sirdar Shamsher Singh Sindunwalluh, and General Cortlandt, February 1847," IOL, European Mss., English 213/2, Edwardes-Nicholson Collection.
70. As noted in the Introduction, the military and religious classes amounted to only 10 per cent or so of the Muslim community. The entire Hindu community may be regarded as an elite since it contained a high proportion of merchants, bankers, and officials.
71. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 161.
72. Ballad of the Multan Campaign, *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, p. 379.
73. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 88-89.
74. Entry of 13 July 1848, Reynell Taylor's *Political Diaries, Assistants' Political Diaries*, p. 169.
75. Edwardes to Currie, 30 May 1848, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 194.
76. Robert Napier to Currie, 3 October 1848, Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence*, p. 362.
77. *Year on the Frontier*, II, 154, 171, 217. Edwardes to Currie, 6 June 1848, *Punjab Parliamentary Papers*, p. 201.
78. Punjab Government, *Report showing the Relations of the British Government with the Tribes on the North-West Frontier of the Punjab, from Annexation in 1849 to the Close of 1855; and Continuation of the Same to August, 1864* (Lahore, 1865), pp. 45-47.
79. *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 200-03.

## CHAPTER SIX

### The Spoils of War: Aftermath of the Multan Insurrection, 1849-1850

"Thus fell the blood-stained city of Mooltan. Where are now the citizens who hooted on the murderers of Anderson and Agnew? . . . Silent—Shame-stricken—hiding in holes and corners—invisible, or kneeling in the mud for mercy—mercy from the Christian conqueror to whose countrymen they had shown none!"—Herbert Edwardes, *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 556-57.

"Men like these, who, to natural bravery, add ability and local knowledge, can never cease to be of real use to Government." — Punjab Board of Administration to Govt, 24 October 1849, recommending rewards for officers of Edwardes' irregular force, IOR, Board's Collections, Coll. to Political Draft 916 of 1850, VIII, pp. 2-6.

Following the Multan rebellion, the Government of India had some accounts to settle. Supporters of the revolt, Hindu officials and merchants, were marked for chastisement. Local allies of Government, Muslim warriors and religious leaders, required compensation. Settling the first account in full proved impossible. Since servants of the former regime represented the only pool of trained manpower available, they could not be totally excluded from the new administration. An attempt to exact heavy reparations from the Hindu community of Multan City for championing the insurrection fizzled ignominiously. Hindu businessmen had long experience in concealing their assets and shrewdly exploited their conquerors' concern for legal niceties. Moreover, as the only capitalists<sup>1</sup> on the scene *banias* loomed large in the scheme of things to come; the government could not afford to press them too hard. Settling the second account presented no such difficulties: Muslim



allies were remunerated generously and their services kept on tap for future emergencies.

After Annexation many Hindu officials of Mulraj's administration sought employment in newly-created Multan District. Local authorities had to utilize these individuals because the Punjab Government could not immediately supply any personnel. In April 1849 Deputy Commissioner Hugh James, who urgently required subordinates to collect the *rabi* revenue in tracts relinquished by Bahawalpur, obtained authorization from the Punjab Board of Administration to employ servants of the previous government. Despite an effort to screen out applicants implicated in open rebellion, the Deputy Commissioner engaged a number of individuals unacceptable to Herbert Edwardes (who was now stationed in Lahore with the ear of the Board of Administration).<sup>2</sup>

Alerted through his pipeline to Multani Muslims, Edwardes complained to the Board in June 1849 that followers of the rebel Mulraj had infiltrated District administration. These allegedly had kept out of sight while Edwardes was still in Multan, then surfaced to impose on his less-knowledgeable successor James. The ex-rebels were listed as follows: *Raizada* Purub Dyal was employed as *kardar* of Nalah Sardarwah Taluqa. Under Mulraj he had been a *kardar* in territory between the Indus and Chenab and had furnished information leading to the rout of a party of Bahawalpur State troops. Later, Purub Dyal was captured by Bahawalpuris, but released without government orders. Purub Dyal's brother, Tulsi Ram, one of Mulraj's chief lieutenants, was in prison at Lahore. Lala Bishen Dass Chopra, kinsman to Mulraj, was reportedly a *kardar* in Multan District. Lala Pheyrah Mull, *kardar* of Taluqa Sikanderabad, had been a senior *kardar* in Multan Province and had once presumed to ignore an order from Edwardes, claiming that he knew no master but Diwan Mulraj. Lala Ootum Chund, retained as *kotwal* (police chief) of Multan City, had maltreated prisoners of war during the insurrection. Eight more Khatri adherents of Mulraj were holding office under the British, including Lala Hakim Rai, "than whom no greater malcontent was in the Fort of Mooltan."<sup>3</sup>

According to Edwardes the hiring of traitors conveyed the impression that British anger was fleeting and anyone might rebel with impunity. Also objectionable was the employment of the brothers Pahoo Mull and Lala Jai Kishen as *kardars* of *Taluqas* Shujabad and Bahadarpur respectively. Although not rebels, they had been henchmen of Diwan Daulat Rai, an "evil" *Nazim* of Dera Ismael Khan. Their merciless exactions had reduced the province to ruin and had provoked a rebellion.<sup>1</sup>

In a despatch of 2 July 1849, the Punjab Government instructed the local authorities to dismiss those individuals named by Edwardes and to engage no more of their ilk. Enemies merited punishment, not employment.<sup>2</sup> In reply Hugh James denied that two of the men were employed in the District and stated that Edwardes had appointed Lala Bishen Dass a *kardar* before leaving Multan. Edwardes had probably confused the official with another Lala Bishen Dass, for the name was quite common. Ootum Chund was a clerk at the police station (*thana*) rather than *kotwal*, but James would discharge him immediately. Pahoo Mull and Jai Kishen had been specially recommended for employment by General Van Cortlandt and James was fully satisfied with Pahoo's administration of Shujabad. The remaining persons were serving temporarily until *tahsildars* could be appointed. If the functionaries were dismissed immediately, no replacements could be found. Government would lose control over several *talukas* for considerable time and would suffer severe financial loss since the third installment of *rabi* revenue was due. James desired to retain the officials for a few weeks until revenue had been collected and *tahsils* had been organized.<sup>3</sup> Commissioner Edgeworth informed the Board that former rebels would be relieved as soon as they could be replaced, and pointed out that Pahoo Mull had not participated in the revolt. He remarked that government would have few native underlings left if everyone who had served an extortionate *Nazim* was discharged.<sup>4</sup>

Adamant, the Punjab Government directed Edgeworth on 20 August to remove all former rebels without delay and bar them from future employment. Efficient Hindustani or Punjabi *tahsildars* would be sent from Lahore if needed. As for Pahoo Mull and Jai Kishen, Edwardes objected to the brothers because they were themselves extortioners, not merely be-



cause they had chanced to serve an extortionate master. The Board would not insist on dismissal of the men but could not comprehend why James wished to retain them after reading Edwardes' comments. The Deputy Commissioner moreover should explain why *rabi* revenue was still outstanding in late July.<sup>8</sup>

The provincial government was not responsible for collecting the revenue and could afford the luxury of ordering wholesale dismissals of political "unreliables." Officers on the scene balked at executing the Board's decrees, being concerned with the practical problem of finding men to run the District. Edwardes' opposition to employment of Pahoo Mull and Jai Kishen appeared somewhat illogical, given the fact that his friend Faujdar Khan had commanded the troops of the "evil" Daulat Rai.<sup>9</sup> Pheyrah Mull, as mentioned in Chapter Two, had been imprisoned by Edwardes before the revolt for disobeying a command to despatch specie across the Indus. Having sat out the war in jail, Pheyrah could not have been an active rebel. Apparently, Edwardes never had forgiven the *kardar* for his defiance. When the government took up Edwardes' cudgels, it seems to have constituted a marriage of peevishness and pique whose progeny, a puerile hassle, kept district affairs in a mild uproar for several months over the hiring and firing of less than fourteen people.

## II

With a view to deterring future sedition, the Government of India strove mightily to extract heavy reparations from the Hindu community of Multan City. In this instance policy and profit seemed to coincide nicely. The Multan area enjoyed a reputation as an El Dorado. John Lawrence had anticipated that under new management the province would yield Rs. 700,000 to Rs. 800,000 more in revenue per year. Multan City itself was reputedly a fabulously wealthy commercial metropolis. These golden dreams proved to be as illusory as those gaint ant-heaps of gold dust which (according to Herodotus) ants bigger than foxes had once erected in the Punjabi deserts.<sup>10</sup> After a long, tortuous, and at times farcial exchange of correspondence, Government had to retire with empty hands.

On 8 January 1849 (shortly after the storming of Multan City the Prize Agent of the conquering army, Major F. Wheeler, notified Herbert Edwardes that all public and private property within the walls was forfeit. Wheeler proposed that the inhabitants be made to ransom their possessions for a large sum and requested a meeting with the political officer (who was the local representative of civil authority) to discuss ways and means.<sup>11</sup>

In reply to the Prize Agent, Edwardes maintained that all the property in question was indeed forfeit to the Crown, but to the Crown of Punjab. In return for a yearly payment of Rs. 2,200,000 the Indian Government had stationed an army in Punjab to uphold the authority of Maharaja Dulip Singh. Diwan Mulraj having rebelled against his sovereign, British forces recaptured Multan on behalf of the Maharaja. The Government of India as guardian of the boy-prince would decide whether he ought to exercise his right to all property in the city. Edwardes contended that Government would not want Dulip to ruin a flourishing city by a sweeping act of retribution but would prefer to have him impose a fine at an appropriate time. The Government of India had no right to share in this fine. Government could reward the troops by issuing extra *batta* (active service allowance). Edwardes requested prize agents to refrain from confiscation of private property while he obtained a decision from the Governor-General, who was camped close at hand. In the meantime agents could occupy themselves in searching out public property, such as stores of grain, salt, indigo, and sugar as well as the possessions of Mulraj and his followers.<sup>12</sup> The Commanding General, possibly at the urging of Edwardes, forbade prize agents to seize private property or levy fines. Obviously unhappy, the agents again laid claim to all property in town and fort and announced that they would probably press the claim at a later date.<sup>13</sup>

The Resident, Frederic Currie, opined that Multanis should be punished for disloyalty to the Maharaja. Whether or not property within the city was declared a prize of war, wealthy citizens ought to pay ransom for protection from pillage. The Resident doubted that the insurrection had been purely an internal disturbance of the Lahore realm.<sup>14</sup>

In a harshly worded minute of 20 January 1849, Lord Dalhousie repudiated the notion that Multan prize property



belonged to the Sikh Kingdom. Mulraj's murder of two British officers had overshadowed his revolt against the Maharaja. The Government of India had waged war against the Diwan in order to exact punishment for the slayings, not to restore Multan to Dulip Singh. Furthermore, the Durbar had been obligated to avenge the murders. Mulraj had been a Durbar subject and the two Englishmen had gone to Multan on Durbar business. By failing to act, the Sikh Raj had made itself a party to the Diwan's crime and the Government intended to exact reparations.<sup>15</sup> After proclaiming the right of the Government of India to all property within "determinedly hostile" Multan, the Governor-General declared that exercise of this right would be neither just nor politic. A fine should be levied which, though not ruinous, would be severe enough to deter future revolts. Military and civil authorities at Multan were best qualified to assess the penalty.<sup>16</sup>

The fine was set at Rs. 1,500,000. This the townsfolk either could not or would not pay. The Hindu community (the chief target of the levy) mounted a totally effective campaign of passive resistance. Nobody would admit to having any cash. The contractors who customarily farmed the revenues of numerous state-owned gardens around the town now professed inability to put down security deposits, even when offered very favorable leases. Deputy Commissioner James was left with the unpalatable alternatives of waiving deposits or taking the holdings under direct management. In desperation the prize agents numbered and appraised houses in hopes of realizing the fine by making each householder pay one-third of the value of his dwelling. This ploy also failed when the assessed worth of 9344 houses surveyed came to only Rs. 1,231,979.<sup>17</sup>

In late May Hugh James reported that the fine of Rs. 1,500,000 could not be realized. The officers who made the original assessment had been misled by Multan's pre-war reputation for opulence and by the sight of many splendid mansions. It subsequently became apparent that the town's prosperity had derived from its situation on a main caravan route from Central Asia; local trade had been of little consequence. The long-distance trade had been managed by foreign merchants, to whom most of the mansions belonged. They had left early in the war and were disinclined to return so long as a heavy fine hung over Multan. In the meantime, commerce was at a standstill. The resident population consisted of

small shopkeepers and artisans, who claimed to be completely impecunious. While skeptical of this assertion, the Deputy Commissioner was convinced that "even torture would fail to extract one-twentieth part of the ransom" and that the aggregate wealth of the *baniyas* did not come to one-third of the amount. James saw no way of realizing the cash value of personal assets: even if houses were confiscated and put up for sale, no buyers would come forward.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, at the end of April a delegation of Multani *baniyas* had waited on Herbert Edwardes at Lahore to petition for remission of the exaction. In addition to professing destitution, they put forward an ingenious legal argument. A ransom was paid to spare a town from pillage. Since however Multan had been sacked, a ransom could not in justice be demanded. The *baniyas* complained as well that prize agents had employed coercion in an effort to extract money. The Board of Administration referred this petition to Deputy Commissioner James for comment.<sup>19</sup>

James confirmed that "the town was plundered to a very considerable extent."<sup>20</sup> Native subordinates of prize agents indeed had mistreated some individuals, but the petition exaggerated the extent of such abuses. In one instance a man had been confined to compel him to pay ransom, but a prize agent had freed him.<sup>21</sup> The Commissioner of Multan Division, M.P. Edgeworth, argued that a ransom could not be justified since Multan had been pillaged.<sup>22</sup>

In June 1849 the Board of Administration recommended that the Government of India remit the entire fine. Multan would not revive as a center of commerce unless relief came quickly. Other towns in the region—Leia, Bahawalpur, and Mithankot—were equally well situated to serve as major entrepôts and were already profiting from the stagnation of Multan.<sup>23</sup>

In a minute of 18 July Lord Dalhousie somewhat querulously conceded that the levy would have to be cancelled. His Lordship took pains to stress that this action was being taken solely because the sum could not be collected, not because he was in any way swayed by the arguments of economic expediency advanced by the Punjab administration. The Governor-General found fault with Commissioner Edgeworth's reasoning. As the exaction was to have been a fine not a ransom, the question of whether or not a sack took place was immaterial.<sup>24</sup>

The upshot of this episode was that the Multani Hindus



successfully "stonewalled" the conquerors, who were to a considerable extent prisoners of their own scruples. James' assertion that torture would not wring a twentieth part of the fine out of the populace was only a figure of speech since he had no intention of resorting to systematic torture. Given the hoarding propensities of *banias*, it was likely many lakhs were salted away. In 1818 the *Khalsa* army had taken a vast booty:

Great were the ravages committed by the Sikh troops on this occasion. About 400 to 500 houses in the fort were razed to the ground, and their owners deprived of all they had. The precious stones, jewelry, shawls and other valuables belonging to the Nawab were confiscated to the State, and were carefully packed by Diwan Ram Diyal for the inspection of the Maharaja. The arms were all carried away. In the town many houses were set on fire, and nothing was left with the inhabitants that was worth having. Hundreds were stripped of their clothes. Outrages were committed on the women, many of whom committed suicide by drowning themselves in the wells, or otherwise putting an end to their lives in order to save themselves from dishonour. Hundreds were killed in the sack of the city and indeed there was hardly a soul who escaped both loss and violence.<sup>25</sup>

The Company, however, was not prepared to employ such methods. Multan's Hindus seem to have caught on very quickly to the fact that the new rulers, though ferocious enough in battle or in a sack on the heels of battle, were bound in peacetime by rigid forms and procedures. The Hindus exploited this trait by obstructionist tactics, which an indigenous ruler would hardly have tolerated and by legalistic arguments of the incompatibility of wholesale pillage with a demand for ransom.

Balked of a ransom the pertinacious prize agents launched a search for treasure reputedly buried by Mulraj. Golden memories of the capture of Bharatpur in 1826, when state property worth Rs. 4,800,000 had been seized, may have disposed the officers to believe in vast hoards.<sup>26</sup> Anyone revealing the location of treasure was promised a quarter of the trove.

In October 1849, three servants of Mulraj, in prison on political charges, undertook to disclose the hiding place of Rs. 300,000 in return for the reward and free pardons. They claimed that they could unearth more if allowed to communicate with friends and protected from violence. Prize Agent

Wheler requested the Governor-General to order the Board of Administration to pardon the convicts and render all necessary assistance.<sup>27</sup> Lord Dalhousie saw no need to split the proceeds with the men in addition to bestowing pardons.<sup>28</sup> Although prepared to release two of the prisoners, the Board opposed a pardon for Khooljus, formerly the *munshi* to Mulraj, because he had counseled his master to do away with Vans Agnew and Anderson.<sup>29</sup> The Governor-General agreed that Khooljus should not be set at liberty.<sup>30</sup>

The records contain no mention of discovery of the Diwan's buried wealth. This perhaps had existed largely in the prize agents' imaginations inflamed by popular report. Most of the Diwan's assets were accounted for. Mulraj had remitted most of his liquid wealth to a banker in Amritsar in preparation for retirement. Upon outbreak of the insurrection, British authorities confiscated from the banker more than Rs. 700,000 belonging to the Diwan.<sup>31</sup> In addition, considerable property fell into British hands after the capture of Multan Fort:

... Multan is the beau ideal of a Buneea's fort, or rather fortified shop: never perhaps in India have such depots existed of merchandise and arms, amalgamated as they are with avarice. More opium, indigo, salt, sulphur, and every known drug, are heaped in endless profusion—there apparently ancient graineries in the bowels of the earth disclose their huge hoards of grain and rice; here stacks of earthen ghee vessels, brimming with grease, fill the pukka receptacles below ground—there silks and shawls revel in darkness, bales rise on bales; here some chest discovering glittering scabbards of gold and gems—there reveals tiers of copper canisters crammed with gold mohurs.<sup>32</sup>

Any attempt to reconcile the actions and utterances of the Governor-General with the chronology of events portends a strategical overlay of a purely tactical operation. Much of his apparent liverish huffing and puffing at underlings actually created a record and a basis for the annexation of the Punjab. Company interests became clothed in the raiment of moral right. Dalhousie's Minute of 20 January 1849, branding Mulraj and the whole Sikh state as partners in crime, clearly set forth his Government's position. The groundwork was being laid for the act of annexation which was consummated on 29 March 1849. A like concern for appearances was manifest in Dalhousie's handling of the remission issue. The monetary demand was characterized as a fine for misdeeds rather than a



ransom to redeem spoils of war. The "fine" was being lifted only because the means to pay it did not exist, not to permit economic recovery as urged by the Punjab authorities. Principle had not been sacrificed to expediency.

### III

After Annexation the Company set out to reward its Pathan allies in the recent war. Sarfaraz Khan Sadozai had been an off-stage presence during the Multan insurrection. Sarfaraz was the sole surviving son of Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan who had died fighting the Sikh invaders in 1818. The Sikhs had given him a pension but compelled him to reside at Lahore under close observation. In 1848 Sarfaraz had used his influence as titular Nawab to induce the Multani Pathans to abandon Diwan Mulraj.<sup>33</sup>

Under the Sikhs the pensions of Sadozai exiles at Lahore had totalled Rs. 37,998, of which Nawab Sarfaraz Khan's personal share amounted to Rs. 14,720. The entire sum had been paid to Sarfaraz as head of the clan. The Nawab had been permitted to determine the shares of his relatives and to levy fines "as the only way of controlling the female part of the household."<sup>34</sup> In 1849 Sarfaraz petitioned the Board of Administration to leave him some vestige of chiefly dignity by respecting his authority over the family. The Board allowed the Nawab to continue as paymaster and comptroller of the Sadozai household, provided he kept receipts of all disbursements to be produced upon demand. The several pensions were confirmed for the lives of the current holders.<sup>35</sup>

The leading Multani Pathan officers in Herbert Edwardes' irregular force were: Faujdar Khan Alizai, Ghulam Sirwar Khan Khakwani, Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani, Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai, and Ghulam Kasim Khan Alizai (all of whom have been encountered in the preceding pages). In October 1849 Edwardes proposed rewarding each of his lieutenants with a *jagir* and a state-owned garden.<sup>36</sup>

Edwardes' recommendations became a bone of contention in a Board of Administration already divided over *jagir* policy. Henry Lawrence, President of the Board, favored generous treatment of the multitudes of revenue assignees inherited from the Sikh regime. He contended that the British were

morally bound to show consideration for classes which had been displaced from power. Also Lawrence believed it politically wise to conciliate persons who retained some influence. John Lawrence, backed by Governor-General Dalhousie, felt no sympathy for men he deemed parasites. He held that a fixed, equitable revenue settlement would do far more to reconcile Punjabis to British sway than retention of any number of *jagirdars*.<sup>37</sup>

John argued that granting money pensions to Multani Pathans would be in the best interests of both recipients and government. Under Native rule *jagirs* were valued highly because they conferred dignity and power. A revenue assignee exercised political and judicial authority within his domain and extracted as much income as possible. In order to protect the populace from possible oppression, the new government felt obliged to divest assignees of administrative prerogatives and prohibit collections in excess of the assessed value of *jagirs*. John Lawrence predicted that *jagirdars*, unable to grasp that times had changed, would make unauthorized demands upon their tenants. Tenants would appeal to British courts and the courts would rule against the assignees, who would then feel cheated by Government. Furthermore, Government could not rely on the support of *jagirdars* in a crisis because possession of a revenue assignment conferred a measure of independence. On the other hand, the incomes of pensioners were completely at the "grace and favor" indeed of government.<sup>38</sup> The Board decided to recommend cash pensions instead of *jagirs* for the Pathan chiefs by a vote of two to one, with C. G. Mansel, the third member, siding with John Lawrence against Henry.<sup>39</sup>

Governor-General Dalhousie approved the Punjab Government's recommendations except in the case of Faujdar Khan. His Lordship was absolutely opposed to hereditary *jagirs* and reluctant to grant lifetime *jagirs*. Nonetheless he had previously promised one of the latter type to Faujdar in response to the personal entreaties of Henry Lawrence. Accordingly, the Alizai chief was given the option of a Rs. 4,000 annual pension or a life *jagir* of the same value on the Trans-Indus Frontier. A frontier *jagir* was the least objectionable variety because an exception to general policy in the marches did not establish a precedent for the rest of India.<sup>40</sup>

Unwilling to accept defeat on even one point, John Lawrence attempted to convince Faujdar Khan that he would be better



off with a cash pension. According to the latter, John never forgave him for choosing a *jagir*.<sup>41</sup> The Lawrence brothers' divergent positions mirrored their strongly contrasting attitudes toward local aristocrats. Henry championed Faujdār Khan's cause before the Governor-General; John told the Pathan what was good for him.

Under the proposals sanctioned by the Governor-General in November 1849, each of the Pathan leaders was to receive a pension or *jagir* and a garden; in addition Faujdār Khan was to get a salary of Rs. 400 per month for special service on the North-West Frontier. Subsequently, however, the Government of India revoked the award of a garden to Faujdār at the request of the Punjab administration. It developed that the revenue from that garden (Rs. 1050-12-3 per annum) had already been earmarked for sorely-needed municipal improvements at Multan City. Since Faujdār had not been informed of the grant, it could be cancelled without causing ill-feeling.<sup>42</sup> In final form the awards stood as follows:

Name	Yearly <i>jagir</i> or Pension	Monthly Salary	Other
Faujdār Khan	Rs. 4000 ( <i>jagir</i> )	Rs. 400	
Ghulam Sirwar Khan	Rs. 2400 (Pension)	—	Garden (Shujabad)
Ghulam Mustafa Khan	Rs. 2000 (Pension)	—	Garden (Multan City)
Sadiq Muhammad Khan	Rs. 2000 (Pension)	—	Garden (Multan City)
Ghulam Kasim Khan	Rs. 1000 (Pension)	—	Garden (Multan City)

The munificent grants to these chieftains, in addition to rewarding them for past services, put them so to speak on retainer in case their ability and influence should be needed in future. By winning over the principal Multani chiefs, the Company's Raj also acquired a hold on the allegiances of their compatriots. The Multani Pathans comprised a tightly-knit body of military settlers, most of whom were clansmen or retainers of the leading families.<sup>43</sup>

Company rule usually spelled ruin for the traditional type of South Asian warrior:

... the soldier longs for native rule. He is not fit or inclined for our service. His trade is gone; he is too old or lazy to learn a new one. Crowds of irregular horse and footmen are thrown out of employment and swell the number of the discontented.<sup>44</sup>

Multani Pathan fighting men escaped this fate due to their leaders' timely alliance with the British during the Multan rebellion.

As part of the post-war settlement, 2000 of Edwardes' irregulars were permanently retained in the Company's service. This was as much a political as a purely military step, being calculated to avert a danger foreseen by Henry Lawrence in November 1849. After noting that the Derajat frontier was quiet because the military classes had enlisted under the Company's standard, Henry pointed out that the same men could easily turn against Government if cast adrift. These auxiliaries shunned service in regular units, but fight to the death under trusted leaders such as Herbert Edwardes. They could be utilized as fort garrisons and armed police a safe distance from their native haunts.<sup>45</sup>

In a petition of December 1849, Faujdar Khan pointedly reminded the Board of Administration of Herbert Edwardes' written guarantee that all Multani Pathans forsaking Mulraj would have an opportunity to prove in court their right to the *kasur* (landlord's share of produce) of estates lost thirty years previously. (These were the holdings previously mentioned as having been taken over by *patwaris* and tenants following the Sikh occupation). Although the twelve-year statute of limitations in land cases would have to be waived, "God is our witness that if this be contrary to Regulations it will be consonant with justice."<sup>46</sup> According to Faujdar, the stolen *kasur* was worth Rs. 50,000 annually. He asserted further that the lost holdings were hereditary lands, not *jagirs*, and that most claimants still possessed title deed.<sup>47</sup>

The Punjab administration favored a day in court for the Pathans. It observed: "to restore a large body of influential men to their ancestral rights (assuming their claims) and thus to bind them to us by ties of gratitude, would be a politic measure in the opinion of the Board."<sup>48</sup> Before committing itself, the Supreme Government desired a report from the Multan authorities on the Pathan petition. Commissioner M.P. Edgeworth corroborated Faujdar's account and acknowledged the Pathans had undergone much hardship. He was nonetheless reluctant to relax the statute of limitations, since one exception would inevitably lead to demands for further ones.<sup>49</sup>

Notwithstanding Edgeworth's adverse comment, the Government of India authorized a hearing of the claims.<sup>50</sup> In light



of the Commissioner's "rules are rules" attitude, the Pathans had done well to secure a written undertaking from Edwardes. The wording of the Punjab Government's order in this case left no doubt that the waiver of the twelve-year rule was politically motivated: "to establish the right of a party to sue, irrespective of the statute of limitations on the merits of his claim to repossession of *zamindari* property, he must prove that he was a Multani Pathan present with Major Edwardes' force, or that he is a member of a family of Multani Pathans, some of the members of which family were present with Major Edwards' force."<sup>51</sup>

However expedient politically, the foregoing policy was not always economically sound or fair to "inferior proprietors" or "cultivators" on the lands concerned. In Multan District little harm was done because the courts were unwilling to oust people who had been in ineffective possession for a generation. Hence, most suits were compromised by awarding the Pathan claimants a small grain rent (*hak kasur*) which was customarily paid to superior landholders who had lost control of their domains. The right to *hak kasur* (two *seers per maund* or one-twentieth gross produce) did not confer full *zamindari* rights to engage for the revenue of or to alienate land.<sup>52</sup> A few families regained *zamindari* powers over part of their pre-Sikh holdings. The Bamozai Pathans for example recovered two out of an original ten villages.<sup>53</sup> Muzaffargarh district courts were more generous, restoring *zamindari* rights over thirteen villages to Pathans. These rulings had a harmful effect. In 1853 the Deputy-Commissioner stated that "exercise of the rights of the Pathans who recovered *kasur* paralyzed the industry of the cultivators."<sup>54</sup> In 1859, another Deputy-Commissioner confirmed that:

Restoration of the Pathans to *kasur* rights had been impolitic. The failure to define those rights had allowed them to encroach on the inferior proprietors and to ruin them . . . villages . . . had been ruined in this manner. The result was that in some villages the Pathans succeeded in ousting altogether the inferior proprietors; in others they reduced them to the position of tenants-at-will.<sup>55</sup>

The policy of securing the loyalty of the Multani Pathans by rich rewards paid handsome dividends. Faujdar Khan rendered such valuable service on two expeditions against Frontier tribes that his Rs. 400 monthly service pay was soon converted

into a pension. From 1854 to 1856, Faujdar acted as Government of India representative at Kabul. There he was *persona grata* as a relation of the ruling house of Afghanistan. (Amir Dost Muhammed Khan of Kabul belonged to the Barakzai branch of the powerful Durrani tribe of western Afghanistan and Faujdar to the Alizai section of that tribe). In 1856 Lord Dalhousie doubled Faujdar Khan's monthly pension to Rs. 800 and invested him with the title of "Nawab" for his part in negotiating an Anglo-Afghan friendship treaty. Nawab Faujdar Khan again served as a *wakil* (envoy) in Afghanistan between 1857 and 1869, ably representing his government there during the perilous days of the Sepoy Revolt.<sup>56</sup>

Ghulam Sirwar Khan Khakwani recovered sufficiently from his wound to accompany a military mission to Kandahar in 1857. Major Lumsden of the Guide Corps, who headed the delegation, was struck by the steadfastness of his Multani escort when hostile tribesmen threatened to attack: "In the midst of strangers it was refreshing in the extreme to see the Mooltani sowars calmly clustering round their chief . . . Such moments bring out men's characters, and the coolness of the Nawab Faujdar Khan and Ghulam Sirwar Khan was an earnest of their mettle."<sup>57</sup> After the fall of Multan City, Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani was put in charge of the agricultural lands around the town by Herbert Edwardes. Edwardes took this step because the Pathan had "the character of raising barren districts to a state of prosperity by kindness and encouragement to the cultivators, qualities much required here at this moment to repair the evils of war."<sup>58</sup>

#### IV

Pirs, as well as Pathans, shared in the post-Annexation distribution of largesse. As the most influential religious dignitary, *Mukhdum* Shah Mahmud Qureshi received the most generous treatment.<sup>59</sup> At a time when the prevalent tendency was to severely cut back on revenue assignments and other grants conferred by previous regimes, Shah Mahmud's emoluments emerged virtually unscathed.

Under the Sikh government, the equivalent of Rs. 2,200 per year were allocated for support of the Qureshi shrines: Rs. 1,500 in cash and Rs. 700 in income from revenue-free



lands (ten wells with an area of 355 acres). After deduction of an audience fee (*nazrana*) the actual income was Rs. 2,030-8. The *Mukhdum* also received part of the revenue of village Sahee Nuth on the Diwanwah Canal, which he had founded in 1834. Prior to that date, the site of the future village had consisted of a few wells in the waste paying a fixed money revenue: one-third to the *Mukhdum* and two-thirds to the state. After the construction of the Diwanwah, Shah Mahmud colonized the waste under a patent (*sanad*) from Diwan Sawan Mal. Under the terms of the *sanad*, revenue was collected in kind with one-fourth going to the *Mukhdum*. Following Annexation, a cash assessment of Rs. 134 *per annum* was imposed on the village. In September 1850 the Board of Administration proposed that the lands yielding Rs. 700 yearly be assigned to the shrines in perpetuity and that Rs. 1,300 in cash *per annum* be paid during the lifetime of Shah Mahmud. In addition, one-fourth or Rs. 33-8 of the cash assessment on Sahee Nuth should be paid to Shah Mahmud and his male heirs in perpetuity. These recommendations were approved by the Government of India.<sup>60</sup>

In addition, the Punjab administration sought a special grant of Rs. 10,000 to repair war damage to the Bahawal Haq and Rukn-i-Alm shrines in Multan Fort. These edifices had taken a heavy battering from the besiegers' artillery and the explosion of the main magazine (touched off by a lucky shell). Bahawal Haq's tomb, its dome shattered like an eggshell, was in the worst shape. Shah Mahmud had begun restoration with his own funds in hopes of receiving governmental assistance. According to the Board of Administration, the project could not be finished without state aid. The Board contended that, "such an act of grace and favor would be fully appreciated and long held in remembrance by the Mahomedan population of Mooltan and by the pilgrims who yearly visit the shrines."<sup>61</sup>

The Government of India refused to fund repairs to "a Mahomedan Shrine." Lord Dalhousie made the startling observation that, "his Lordship is not aware of any claims that can be stated by the Mahomedans of Mooltan to grace and favor from us."<sup>62</sup> His Lordship seemed unaware that Muslim aid had been instrumental in the suppression of the Multan rebellion. State assistance turned out to be less indispensable than depicted. *Mukhdum* Shah Mahmud restored the shrines with donations of money and labor from his disciples.<sup>63</sup>

Multan Hindus were only temporarily inconvenienced by the disruptions of war and the effort to levy a fine. Neither Englishman nor Muslim challenged the long-established Hindu dominance of trade and banking. On the contrary, colonial rule was to provide the Hindu community with new opportunities for aggrandizement.

It is noteworthy that the Company's policy towards the dominant sections of Muslim society followed in the footsteps of that of its predecessor. The Sikhs had held down the Derajat with Multani Pathan mercenaries<sup>64</sup> and had dealt gingerly with the *pir* families. Following Annexation, the Muslim military class reaped a rich reward for its wartime services and in return placed its bravery and local knowledge at the disposal of the Company's Raj. Muslim holy men were treated liberally not so much because of any tangible assistance rendered the conquerors as because they represented an unknown quantity which it seemed politic to cultivate.

## NOTES

1. "Capitalist" is used here in its non-Marxist, non-pejorative sense of an individual who accumulates and derives income from capital. No other term so accurately describes the economic role of Multani Hindus.
2. Deputy Commissioner James to Commissioner Edgeworth, 26 July 1849, IOR, India Political Consultations, 1849, Range 198, Vol. 55, Consultation 76 of 17 November, 1849.
3. Edwardes to Board, Lahore, 29 June 1849, *Ibid.*, Cons. 73 of 17 November, 1849.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Board to Commissioner of Multan, 2 July 1849, *Ibid.*, Cons. 74 of 17 November 1849.
6. James to Edgeworth, 26 July 1849, James to Edgeworth, 31 July 1849, *Ibid.*, Cons. 76, 77 of November 1849.
7. Edgeworth to Board, 31 July 1849, *Ibid.*, Cons. 75 of 17 November 1849.
8. Board to Edgeworth, 20 August 1849, *Ibid.*, Cons. Cons. 78 of 17 November 1849.
9. Edwardes to Board of Administration, 9 October 1849, IOR, Board of



- Control's Collections, 1849-50, Vol. 2386, Collection in 33 vols. to India Political Draft 916 of 1850, VIII, 12-13.
10. Herodotus, *The Histories*, Aubrey de Selincourt trans. (Baltimore, 1966), pp 217-18. Since Herodotus' "India" was the Indus Valley, the home of these gold-mining insects may possibly have been in the vicinity of Multan.
  11. Maj. Wheler to Edwardes, 8 January 1849, NAI, Gol For. Dept. (Political Branch), No. 234 (A) of 24 February 1849. According to contemporary military custom, all the valuables in a town taken by assault were legitimate spoils of war but free-lance looting by the soldiery was forbidden. Prize agents collected the booty and converted it into cash. This prize money was then distributed according to set rules with officers receiving the lion's share. Lord Combermere, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, had received one-eighth of the prize money from the capture of the Jat stronghold of Bharatpur in 1826. W.H. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official* (Karachi, 1973), p. 355, f.n. 1. Reprint of 1915 edition annotated by V.A. Smith; first published 1844.
  12. Edwardes to Wheler, 8 January, 1849 *Ibid.*, No. 234(A) of 24 February 1849. Edwardes' call for restraint represented an about-face from earlier animosity towards Hindu insurgents. He had described the plundering of Hindu shops of Dera Ghazi Khan and murder of a Hindu *faqir* by Muslims as unavoidable incidents of native warfare (*A Year on the Frontier*, II, 224-25). He had also termed the Multan Hindus thorough seditionists who deserved whatever happened to them (Edwardes to Resident Currie, 31 July 1848, in Ganda Singh (ed.), *Private Correspondence*, p. 247). Realization that he was responsible for the welfare of a major city apparently made Edwardes more moderate.
  13. Wheler to Edwardes, 9 January 1849, NAI, Gol Foreign (Political), No. 234(A) of 24 February 1849.
  14. Resident Currie to Gol, Lahore, 16 January 1849, *Ibid.*, No. 233 (A) of 24 February 1849.
  15. Governor-General's Minute of 20 January 1849, *Ibid.*, No. 235 (A) of 24 February 1849.
  16. *Ibid.*, No. 235 (A) of 24 February 1849.
  17. Hugh James to Commissioner Edgeworth, Multan, 25 May 1849, IOR, India Secret Proceedings, 1849, Vol. 160, Cons. 33 of 25 August 1849. Prize agents to James, n.d., *Ibid.*, Cons. 33 of 25 August 1849.
  18. *Ibid.*
  19. Punjab Board of Administration to Hugh James, Lahore, 1 May 1849, IOR, *Ibid.*, No. 32 of 25 August 1849.
  20. James to Commissioner Edgeworth, Multan, 25 May 1849, *Ibid.*, Cons. 33 of 25 August 1849.
  21. *Ibid.*
  22. Edgeworth to Board of Administration, 26 May 1849, *Ibid.*, No. 33 of 25 August 1849.
  23. Board to Gol, 20 June 1849, *Ibid.*, Cons. 32 of 25 August 1849.
  24. Governor-General's Minute of 18 July 1849, *Ibid.*, Cons. 34 of 25 August 1849.
  25. *Multan Gazetteer* 1923-24, Pt. A. P. 56. Ranjit Singh estimated the booty at Rs. 40,000,000. See, William Moorcroft and George Trebeck, *Travels in the*

- Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab, in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara*, (ed.), H.H. Wilson (2 vols.; London, 1841), I, 101-02.
26. W.H. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections*, p. 355, f.n. 1.
  27. Lieutenant-Colonel Wheler to GoI, 25 October 1849, NAI, GoI Foreign (Secret) Proceedings, No. 33(A) of 22 December, 1849.
  28. GoI to Wheler, 5 November 1849, *Ibid.*, No 35(A) 22 December 1849.
  29. Board to GoI, 16 November 1849, *Ibid.*, No 36(A) 22 December 1849.
  30. GoI to Lieutenant-Colonel Wheler, 22 November 1849, Minute by Governor-General of 4 December 1849, *Ibid.*, Nos. 37, 38(A) December 1849.
  31. Sita Ram Kohli (ed.) *Trial of Diwan Mul Raj*, pp. 112, 121, 125, 129, 133-34, 38.
  32. *Bombay Times* correspondent quoted in John Dunlop, *Multan: A Series of Sketches During and After the Siege* (London, 1849), pp. 1-2.
  33. *Titled Gentlemen and Chiefs Other Than Ruling Chiefs*, pp. 104-5.
  34. Board of Administration to Government of India, Lahore, 11 July 1849 IOR, India Secret Proceedings, Vol. 160, Consultation 69 of 25 August 1849.
  35. *Ibid.*, India Secret Proceedings, Vol. 160, Cons. 69, 25 Aug. 1849. The Board was inclined to be generous because Sartaraz at age sixty-four was unlikely to be a drain on the public treasury for long. In fact he died in 1851.
  36. Edwardes to Board of Administration, 9 Oct. 1849, Board's Collections, Coll. to Political Draft 916 of 1850, VIII, 44-45. The gardens (*topes*) in question were inherited from the previous government. Being planted in fruit trees, they constituted valuable properties.
  37. Thompson and Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment*, pp. 388-91. Percival Spear, *Oxford History of India*, pp. 655-56. S.S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 179-80.
  38. John Lawrence in Board of Administration to GoI, Lahore, 24 October 1849, IOR, Board's Collections, Collection to Political Draft 916 of 1850, VIII, 1-3.
  39. Board to GoI, 24 October 1849, *Ibid.*, VIII, 2-6.
  40. GoI to Punjab of Administration, 8 November 1849, *Ibid.*, VIII, 47-48.
  41. John Nicholson to Herbert Edwards, 28 February, 1857, IOL, European Mss., E. 212/2, Edwardes-Nicholson Collection.
  42. Board of Administration to GoI, Lahore 21 December 1849, Board's Collections, Collection to Political Draft 916 of 1850, VIII, 49-52. At this time the Government of India acceded to Faujdar's wish that his *jagir* include several villages in Districts Khangarh and Multan of which he was already *zamindar*. In supporting this request, the Board pointed out that the union of *jagirdar* and *zamindar* in one person would meet Lord Dalhousie's objections to revenue assignments pure and simple.
  43. Government of India, Army Department, *Class Handbooks for the Indian Army: Pathans*, by Major R.T.I. Ridgway, 40th Pathans, late recruiting staff officer for Pathans (Calcutta, 1910), p. 131.
  44. J. Lawrence, Acting Political Agent at Lahore, to Governor-General Hardinge, Lahore, 11 September 1846, quoted in R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, I, 191.



45. Letter from Henry Lawrence to the Governor-General, written on the Indus between Kalabagh and Dera Ismā'el Khan, November, 1849, IOL, Eur. MSS. E. 85/9, Sir H.M. Lawrence Collection, Letterbook for August, 1849-May, 1850.
46. Translation of petition from Faujdar Khan, Bahadur, IOR, Indian Political Consultations, 1850, Range 198, Vol. 67, Consultation 20 of 15 February, 1850.
47. *Ibid.*, Consultation 20 of 15 February, 1849.
48. Board of Administration to GoI, 21 Dec. 1849, *Ibid.*, Cons. 19 of 15 Feb. 1850.
49. M.P. Edgeworth, Commissioner Multan Division, to Board of Administration, 23 Jan. 1850, *Ibid.*, Range 198, Vol. 69, Cons. 132 of 3 April 1850.
50. GoI to Board of Administration, 25 Mar. 1850, *Ibid.*, Cons. 133 of 3 April 1850.
51. Quoted in *Muzaffargarh District Gazetteer*, 1929, Pt. A, p. 229.
52. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 70-71. Herbert Edwardes plainly exaggerated in declaring that, "after thirty years, Mooltan has regained its landed aristocracy, and the Juts have once more relapsed into a state of servitude." *A Year on the Frontier*, II, 16.
53. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 86.
54. *Muzaffargarh Gazetteer*, 1929, Part A, p. 229.
55. *Ibid.* "Cultivators" and "interior proprietors" were terms used loosely and sometimes interchangeably. In this part of Punjab both probably referred to a class intermediate between zamindars and the actual tillers of the soil.
56. *Titled Gentlemen and Chiefs Other Than Ruling Chiefs*, pp. 140-41.
57. Quoted in General Sir Peter Lumsden and G.R. Elsmie, *Lumsden of the Guides*, p. 147. See also, *Titled Gentlemen and Chiefs*, pp. 142-43.
58. Entry of 6 February 1849, *Herbert Edwardes' Political Diaries*, p. 328.
59. The prominent Gardezi and Gilani Sayyid families were also recompensed for wartime services. Murad Shah Gardezi was appointed *peshkar* (a subordinate revenue official) in Jhang, being promoted to *tahsildar* in 1850. The Gilani shrine in Multan City was the only one to be granted immunity from pillage. See G.L. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 376, 385, 396.
60. Board of Administration to GoI, 2 Sept. 1850, IOR, India Political Cons., 1850, Range 199, Vol. 14, Cons. 44, 45, 47 of 4 Oct. 1850. GoI to Board, 20 Sept. 1850, *Ibid.*, Cons. 49 of 4 Oct. 1850. Shah Mahmud desired to continue collecting the Sahee Nuth revenue in kind so as to retain assorted cesses; while opposed to this, Commissioner Edgeworth recommended without success that the Mukhdum's share of the cash assessment be raised to one-third.
61. Board of Administration to GoI, 2 Sept. 1850, *Ibid.*, Cons. 44, 45 of 4 Oct. 1850.
62. GoI to Board, 20 Sept. 1850, *Ibid.*, Cons. 49 of 4 Oct. 1850.
63. G.L. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 376.
64. *A Year on the Frontier*, I, 315-18.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### The Administrative and Land Revenue Systems of British Punjab, 1849-1857

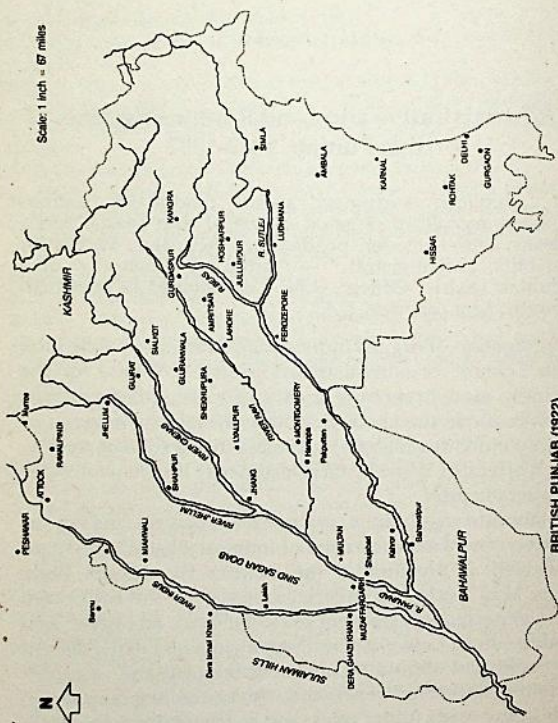
"... publican, auctioneer, sheriff, road-maker, timber-dealer, recruiting sergeant, slayer of wild beasts, book-seller, cattle-breeder, postmaster, vaccinator, discounter of bills, and registrar." — Partial job description of a Punjab District Officer, R.N. Cust, quoted in Bosworth Smith, *Lord Lawrence*, I, 47.

That aggregation of rugged individualists commonly styled the "Punjab School" of administrators shared a distaste for the increasingly monolithic bureaucracy of more settled portions of British India. In their bailiwick these officials strove to return to a highly individualistic style of rule, little aware, apparently, that such attempts at fresh starts historically lead to new cycles of bureaucratization.

The elaborate regulations, separation of powers, and impersonal government characteristic of long-established provinces were viewed as unsuited to the Land of Five Rivers. Wide authority was vested in district officers, in the belief that Punjabis expected government to be personal, accessible, and fast-acting.<sup>1</sup> Both Lawrence brothers maintained that a district officer could and should be almost omniscient and omnipresent. Henry exhorted civil servants, "to live among the people, to do as many cases under trees, and as few under the punkah as possible; to ride about their districts and see and hear for themselves, instead of through the police and *Omlah* [local subordinates]."<sup>2</sup> John was fond of recalling that as a Collector in Delhi Territory he had functioned as "the pivot round which the whole administration of the district revolved."<sup>3</sup> John had been:

at all times and in all places, even in his bedroom, accessible





# **BRITISH PUNJAB (1922)**

(The only major changes since Annexation had been the addition of the southeastern prong around Delhi in 1858 and the splitting off of the North-West Frontier Province in 1901.)

to the people of his district. He loved his joke with the sturdy farmers, his chat with the city bankers, his argument with the native gentry . . . . When out with his dogs and gun he had no end of questions to ask every man he met. After a gallop across country, he would rest on a charpoy, or country bed, and hold an impromptu levee of all the village folk from the headman to the barber.<sup>4</sup>

A caller had found Lawrence clad in "a chupkun, or native undergarment—surrounded by what seemed to me a mob of natives, with two or three dogs at his feet, talking, writing, dictating—in short, doing cutchery."<sup>5</sup>

The reality of Punjab administration did not always correspond to Punjab School ideals. Some district officers misused their powers, and in practice fell somewhat short of the "ontological conception." Nevertheless many civil servants were animated by a high sense of purpose, regarding themselves as regenerators of a diseased society.<sup>6</sup> Arthur Cocks rejoiced in revenue settlement work: "I feel I am doing some tangible good in every order I give; whereas, at Lahore, I was walking comparatively speaking in darkness. I trust I shall return to Lahore much more capable of being of use to the people after having seen with my own eyes their wants and necessities."<sup>7</sup> The doctrine of civilizing mission appealed strongly to self-willed individualists who thrived in frontier areas like the Punjab; the role of supernal arbiter was congenial to their egos. Cocks found it "strange and gratifying to observe with what adoration the people regard me, merely in consequence of my being a Christian, a Sahib. They attach the greatest importance to my paying even a visit to their village, and the moment I am seen the men and women surround me, and are told to pay their respects to the Badshah."<sup>8</sup>

# I

In the wake of Annexation Punjab was divided into 27 districts which constituted the basic units of revenue, police, and judicial administration. The districts, headed by Deputy Commissioners, were grouped into 7 divisions presided over by Commissioners. Commissioners acted as appellate judges and supervised the Deputy Commissioners, but in theory delegated primary executive responsibility to the latter.<sup>9</sup> Deputy Commissioners impinged directly upon the lives of



the populace, for they combined the functions of Revenue Collector, Magistrate (chief of police), and Civil and Criminal Judge. In Punjab, as in the North-Western Provinces, the Collector doubled as Magistrate. The stated theory was that the head revenue authority in a district was responsible for maintenance of prosperity and therefore for security of life and property.<sup>10</sup> More pragmatically, Collectors often required the backing of physical force to coerce recalcitrant revenue-payers. Judicial power was vested in Deputy Commissioners (contrary to practice in the North-Western Provinces) because the architects of Punjab administration disliked divided authority and felt that Western-style legal systems were unsuited to India. The Punjab Board of Administration promulgated simple civil and criminal codes which followed local custom except where the latter conflicted with Western morality, jurisprudence, and convenience. Judges were instructed to rule in accordance with justice, equity, and good conscience, rather than sticking to the letter of the law. When possible, cases were tried publicly in the neighborhood to which the parties belonged. Parties to a dispute argued their own cases, *vakils* (lawyers) being banned from court. Arbitration of disputes by *panchayats* (mediation committees) was encouraged.<sup>11</sup>

Subordinate district officials fell into two categories: gazetted (appointable and removable by the provincial government alone) and non-gazetted (appointable and removable by Commissioners or Deputy Commissioners). Assistant Commissioners and Extra Assistant Commissioners were gazetted; Sub-Collectors (*Tahsildars*), their deputies (*Naib Tahsildars*), and office staffs at district and *tahsil* headquarters were non-gazetted. *Tahsildars* were nominated by Commissioners and confirmed by the Punjab Financial Commissioner. Deputy Commissioners controlled the patronage of other non-gazetted appointments, though Commissioners' sanction was necessary in the case of posts with a salary in excess of Rs. 10 monthly.<sup>12</sup>

Assistant Commissioner was the lowest grade in the Punjab Civil Service, sometimes styled the Punjab Commission. The Punjab Civil Service, equivalent to the Covenanted Service in Regulation Provinces, was at this time exclusively European except for an occasional Anglo-Indian. Assistant Commissioners lightened the load of Deputy Commissioners by performing part of the revenue work and, by trying judicial cases. Assistants armed with judicial powers were sometimes

placed in charge of a *tahsil* in order to acquire administrative experience.

Extra Assistants, corresponding to Uncovenanted Civil Servants in Regulation Provinces, were mostly natives though some were Europeans or Eurasians. Recruited from *Tahsildars* and head clerks in divisional offices, Extra Assistants did much the same work as Assistants on less pay and without prospect of promotion. Financial Commissioner Robert Needham Cust advised district officers to treat Extra Assistants with a mixture of consideration and firmness. 'The importance of this class is very great; they are strong in those points in which the Englishman is weak; knowledge of the people, the locality and the language: they are weak where they [Englishmen] are strong: they often want firmness of purpose, uprightness of character, and freedom from bias: they are apt to be beset with relations in humble life, who are not overscrupulous'.<sup>13</sup>

Extra Assistant Commissioners occupied an anomalous position. Although gazetted officers, they did not belong to the Punjab Civil Service. Until the closing years of the nineteenth century an Extra Assistant Commissionership constituted the highest post to which a Punjabi could aspire after a lifetime of faithful service. By contrast, an Assistant Commissionership was the first rung on the official ladder for young English civil servants. The rank of Extra Assistant Commissioner was one of numerous British attempts to solve a fundamentally insoluble problem: how to reward Indians of talent for good service without giving them too much authority or allowing them to compete directly with Englishmen.<sup>14</sup> The ambivalent British attitude towards Extra Assistants was visible in Cust's advice on how to treat them, reminiscent of instructions for the care and feeding of a useful but potentially fractious domestic animal.

A Deputy Commissioner's office staff consisted of superintendent, readers, record keeper, deputy record keeper, revenue accountant, superintendent of village accountants, and departmental clerks. An office superintendent oversaw all office operations. One of his major responsibilities was checking all records before they were filed in the record room. A reader was attached to every Assistant or Extra Assistant Commissioner 'to read documents on civil, criminal, and revenue matters, and endorse and arrange for the execution of orders. A record-keeper had custody of district records. A revenue



accountant prepared returns of collections for forwarding to divisional headquarters, kept revenue accounts, and maintained records of processes to realize arrears and of measures for clearing balance sheets. A superintendent of village accountants checked and held for a year annual reports by village accountants, and kept a record of mutations in landholding. Departmental clerks specialized in revenue or judicial work. Each Assistant and Extra Assistant Commissioner was provided with a revenue clerk and a judicial clerk who made English translations of evidence of witnesses, took depositions, drew up final proceedings, and delivered files of completed cases to the record room.

A district office was divided into English language and vernacular sub-offices. The office superintendent (*Sarishtidar*) appears to have presided over and coordinated the activities of both these sub-offices.<sup>15</sup>

A district contained four or five *tahsils* (revenue subdivisions) under *Tahsildars*. A district officer on a smaller scale, a *Tahsildar* collected revenue and tried petty civil and criminal cases. Financial Commissioner Cust specified that a *Tahsildar* "should be a man of personal activity and a good horseman: the old style of official, who was a bundle of shawls, with an enormous turban and peaked yellow shoes, riding in a vehicle drawn by fat bullocks, is quite out of place in this Province." *Tahsildars* were assisted by *Naib* (deputy) *Tahsildars*.<sup>16</sup>

*Tahsil* offices were microcosms of district offices. A *Naib Tahsildar* had charge of general business. A revenue accountant and a cash accountant functioned as their titles indicated. A superintendent of village accountants oversaw the village accountants and registered land titles. A cashier handled cash and stamps. Urdu was the language of official business. A record room was attached to the office.<sup>17</sup>

## II

The Punjab Commission comprised 56 carefully picked officers, about evenly divided between civilians from the North-Western Provinces and military men detached for civil duties.<sup>18</sup> However carefully elected, all was not sweetness and light between career civil servants and those with a military background. Harry Lumsden, later famous as Commander of the

Corps of Guides, elected to remain with the Guides upon "seeing a list of the new district officers to be appointed in the Punjab, from which it is evident that all we unfortunate military officers, assistants to Sir Henry Lawrence, who have borne the brunt of the late outbreak, and stood to our posts till the ship split, are to be kept as we are, without gaining a step in the political ladder, while dozens of civilians are put in over our heads, many of them junior to us in the service, and men who have never been out of a drawing room in their lives."<sup>19</sup> This was not the whole story for elsewhere Lumsden confessed, "Office work and confinement within doors is not my specialty; I'd rather ride twenty miles than write a note."<sup>20</sup>

Personal ties counted for a great deal in the Punjab Commission. Herbert Edwardes benefited substantially from the solicitude of the President of the Board of Administration, Henry Lawrence. Like other political officers, Edwardes found difficulty in adjusting to civil work. In a letter of 7 February 1849, Henry advised Edwardes that unless he resumed submitting weekly diaries of activities (something to which Edwardes was averse) he would get into a serious scrape with Government.<sup>21</sup> In March, Henry wrote that Edwardes would receive Rs. 1,500 monthly as Deputy Commissioner of Multan. The Resident would have preferred to give Edwardes Rs. 2,000 monthly but under regulations no district officer was to receive more than Rs. 1,500. If Edwardes did not care for Multan, he could have any district except for Peshawar or Hazara. If district work did not agree with him, he could have a junior secretaryship or commissionership without having acquired revenue and judicial experience in a district. The Resident cautioned Edwardes not to mention these special offers to his deputy at Multan, Hugh James, or anyone else.<sup>22</sup> At the end of March, Edwardes abruptly handed over Multan to Lieutenant James and returned to Lahore without obtaining leave from the Governor-General, as was required. Seeking to mollify Dalhousie, Henry Lawrence explained that Edwardes had been gravely ill and had acted without thinking.<sup>23</sup>

One member of the Punjab Civil Service belonged in a category by himself. Henry Charles Van Cortlandt was neither a civilian from an older province nor a regular army man but a Eurasian who had made a career in the Sikh army. Van Cortlandt's father, a Major of Dragoons, provided him with an



education in England and assisted him in securing of a commission from Ranjit Singh. Beginning as commander of a Muslim battalion, Van Cortlandt rose to General of a powerful, well-disciplined brigade. At the commencement of the Multan uprising, he commanded Durbar forces in the Derajat while doubling as *Nazim* (civil governor) of Dera Ismael Khan. General Van Cortlandt's trained Muslim battalions—the "Sikh" army contained many Mussalman units—provided the nucleus around which Edwardes' wild levies coalesced. During the campaign Van Cortlandt acted as *Nazim* of conquered Dera Ghazi Khan and distinguished himself in the field.<sup>24</sup> Herbert Edwardes thought highly enough of Van Cortlandt to recommend him for *Nazim* of Multan after its conquest. According to Edwardes, the General differed from the generality of Durbar officials in being incorruptible and hardworking. He gave great satisfaction as an *adalti* (civil judge) and went over all accounts in person to insure against fraud by *kardars*.<sup>25</sup>

The Government of India had to find a way to requite Van Cortlandt's services without antagonizing vested interests. In Edwardes' opinion, the easiest course would be to pension off the General. Although Van Cortlandt was fully competent to command a frontier brigade, any move to reward him with a British commission would arouse jealousy among the officer corps.<sup>26</sup> As a Eurasian from outside the ranks of the regular army, he would have been objectionable on two counts to its officers.

Military authorities demonstrated that they did not consider Van Cortlandt one of the club by refusing to award him the six months' *batta* (active service allowance) given to officers who participated in the second Punjab campaign. Their excuse, that he was ineligible as an officer in Durbar service, was technically valid but rather petty.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, the Government took him into the Punjab Commission, his first appointment being Deputy Commissioner of Gugera District (afterwards renamed Montgomery).<sup>28</sup>

Apparently Van Cortlandt and his men received a package deal in exchange for their support at a critical moment. After Annexation his two Muslim regiments, the Suraj Mukhi and Katar Mukhi, were taken into the Company's service as Punjab military police battalions.<sup>29</sup>

Movement of Company officials into Punjab from the North-Western Provinces was accompanied by a parallel flow of

Hindustani subordinates. They carried out initial revenue surveys, because Punjabis were not versed in the elaborate surveying methods employed by the Company. Hindustanis were also utilized in low-echelon administrative posts since importing men already familiar with the system was easier than training Punjabis.

Henry and John Lawrence clashed over employment policy. Henry sought to employ qualified Punjabis and sons of army officers. John "stood out for giving all the uncovenanted berths to natives employed in the Settlement (principally Hindustanis), which was tantamount to excluding Punjaubees and young gentlemen altogether."<sup>30</sup> This disagreement reflected the divergent professional backgrounds and personalities of the Lawrences. As soldier turned political officer, Henry looked with sympathy on the claims of soldiers' sons and recognized the importance of conciliating Punjabis. John, formerly a District Collector in the North-Western Provinces, tended to favor Hindustani *amla* (officials).

The career of Sada Sukh, a Delhi Brahmin, offered a good example of a patron-client relationship between an English official and a Hindustani. In the early 1840s, Herbert Edwardes, then a subaltern, studied oriental languages under Sada Sukh and conceived a high regard for him. Upon becoming a political officer, Edwardes appointed Sada Sukh as head *Munshi* (clerk) in his office.<sup>31</sup> Edwardes was impressed by Sada Sukh's devotion in following him onto a battlefield during the Multan campaign, armed only with pen and paper.

"What are you doing here, Sudda Sookh?" I asked in astonishment. He put up his hands respectfully, and answered: "My place is with my master! I live by his service; and when he dies I die!" A more striking instance of the quiet endurance of the Hindoo character I never saw."<sup>32</sup>

Emma Edwardes described Sada Sukh, who continued as *Munshi* to her husband throughout his service in India, as "a man of noble bearing and the strictest probity, never taking a bribe nor falling into any native vices."<sup>33</sup> Pandit Sheo Ram, son of Sada Sukh, also served in the Punjab as an Extra Assistant Commissioner in Dera Ismael Khan District.<sup>34</sup>



## III

In Punjab, as in the remainder of British India, land revenue constituted the major source of government income. The fashioners of Punjab revenue policy borrowed heavily from a system established in the North-Western provinces during the 1840s by James Thomason. Robert Cust acknowledged this debt by dedicating his *Manual for Revenue Officers in the Punjab* to "James Thomason and John Lawrence, at whose feet I learnt my lesson, and whose principles I have never abandoned."<sup>35</sup> Thomason had combated the following evils: sale of land for arrears of revenue and debt; privileges of superior landholders (*zamindars*); overassessments and consequent balances; and sufferings resulting from former misgovernment. According to Cust, all of these banes had been avoided in Punjab. Land could not be sold for arrears of debt; great landlords did not exist (a misstatement as regards Multan); and assessments were moderate. Cust rhapsodized: "The Punjab Official knows only of Revenue processes by vague report: By a wave of his hand an annual million is levied from a contented and willing people who have never been evicted from their holdings, have never seen their chattels sold or heard the tap of the Collector's hammer."<sup>36</sup>

Government demand was set at one-half net produce, *i.e.* produce remaining after deducting cultivation expenses. Rather than collecting a portion of each year's crop in kind or a cash equivalent, fixed cash assessments were imposed for periods of up to thirty years. The assessment process, or settlement, was based upon calculations of average productivity. Moderate, long-running assessments were favored for a variety of reasons. Assured that additional profits would not be taxed, proprietors would readily make improvements. Government would reap indirect profits in popular contentment, increased prosperity, extended cultivation, and ease of collection. Governmental interference in local affairs would be kept to a minimum. Finally, the desirable institution of "property in land" would be created. The last assumption was based on the theory that title to all land was vested in the state which was therefore entitled to the entire net produce. Until it limited its demand to a fixed proportion of the produce, to remain unchanged for an extended period of years, landed

property, or preferably, landed properties, could not be said to exist.<sup>37</sup>

Government officials talked a great deal about securing "rights" of "proprietors" without providing precise definitions. R.N. Cust unhelpfully defined "rent" as the portion of produce enjoyed by a "landowner" and "landowner" as one who enjoyed "rent." Punjab was visualized as a country of "peasant proprietors" who cultivated their own holdings. In practice, however, many of the tillers of the soil in "peasant proprietary" villages were tenants. Cust himself criticized early settlements for bestowing "occupancy rights" upon tenants, thus infringing on the "rights" of "proprietors." The "proprietors" of a village community belonged to a politically dominant landholding tribe or tribes in the locality. Members of this elite were recorded at settlement as proprietors. Proprietors could sell or mortgage holdings, subject to "pre-emption" (the right to first refusal on all village land offered for sale) by the other village proprietors. "Pre-emption" was a device to preserve integrity of village communities by excluding outsiders.<sup>38</sup> The British officials recognized two other types of proprietors, though regarding them as of less consequence than peasant proprietors. "Superior proprietors," common in Multan and adjacent districts, had exercised a shadowy suzerainty over large expanses but had lost effective control to more energetic agriculturists. They still received small quit-rents in recognition of former dominance. Many villages contained sub-proprietors who were "superior-tenants" or more than tenants because they paid no rent and could engage for revenue and transfer their holdings. Unlike full proprietors, however, they lacked privileges in common land and the power of pre-emption. As a rule they could not become village headmen. Sub-proprietors had diverse origins. Some were descended from families who, though assisting in foundation of the village, had been excluded from full membership because they belonged to a different tribe or caste than the founders. Others derived from tenants who had won exemption from rent through long occupancy or a landlord's favor. Yet others had purchased a proprietor's rights in land without becoming members of the village brotherhood, such membership being non-transferable.<sup>39</sup>

Government settled the revenue with village communities (*mauzas*), not individual proprietors. In theory village prop-



rietors were held jointly responsible for payment of the government demand, but their liability was not always enforced. Village headmen (*lambardars*) variously represented the proprietary body in negotiations with government, agreed to assessments on behalf of the community, and collected revenue from individual proprietors for delivery to the *tahsil-dar*. *Lambardars* were also entrusted with keeping peace in the village and apprehending criminals. For their services headmen received five per cent of the land revenue.

The accounts of circles of villages were kept by *patwaris*. These functionaries recorded revenue collections and balances, village expenses, and land transfers. Their remuneration was three per cent of the land revenue. *Patwaris* were introduced by the British to provide more accurate and complete accounts. They replaced the traditional village weighman (*dhurwai* or *dabir*). From the viewpoint of the revenue payers, the new accountants possessed the drawback of being servants of Government rather than of particular villages. Being paid at *tahsil* headquarters where they worked most of the time, *patwaris* were insulated from local pressures. In addition, they were frequently outsiders who lacked both local knowledge and sympathy with the village *lambardars*.<sup>40</sup>

Villages were classified according to how land was held. In *zamindari* villages all land was held in common by the proprietary body; in *pattidari* villages land was divided among descendants of village founders according to the laws of inheritance; in *bhaicharya* villages, land was also divided but simple possession conferred proprietorship. *Pattidari* and *bhaicharya* villages were termed "pure" if completely partitioned and "impure" if some common land remained. "Pure" villages were uncommon.<sup>41</sup> Arbitrary at best, this system of classification had little relevance to Multan where village communities of any description were rare.

For political and social reasons, the Company endeavored to keep village communities intact. Large-scale transfers of land to interlopers would turn agriculturists against government and break down social cohesion. Therefore, force of law was given to the old custom of pre-emption in land sales. In addition, pre-emption was extended to cover usufructuary mortgages in which the mortgagor turned over land to the mortgagee in exchange for a loan. Land sales for arrears of revenue were prohibited, and sales for debt by decree of civil court

were severely curtailed.

Cust felt obliged to apologize for pre-emption since under *laissez-faire* doctrines any restriction on free transfer constituted a serious violation of property rights. Admittedly, any "interference with the laws which underlie the edifice of human affairs, brings with it its own retaliating disturbance."<sup>42</sup> Pre-emption hindered moneyed persons from sinking capital in agriculture and prevented elimination of the unfit. Despite these *laissez-faire* sentiments, administrators had to deal with facts rather than theories: "We can no more alter the institutions of men, than their language or their garments."<sup>43</sup> Cust hoped that limitations on sale and mortgage would gradually be lifted as agriculturists learned the value of property and ceased to require protection.<sup>44</sup>

#### IV

Summary settlements were conducted at the outset of British rule on the basis of cursory inspections and statistics of past collections. Officials assessed each village a fixed sum and took engagements from apparent proprietors, leaving questions of ownership to be resolved by regular settlements.<sup>45</sup> Summary settlements frequently rested upon inadequate data about previous revenue rates and cultivated and culturable areas. Supposedly moderate assessments sometimes pressed heavily when agricultural prices plummeted.<sup>46</sup>

A typical summary settlement was that of Jhang under the Residency, when Arthur Cocks in just over three months (October 1847-January 1848) had assessed 1067 *mauzas* at a total revenue of Rs. 650,000. Cocks checked information derived from Durbar records and officials against personal observations and the statements of *lambardars* and *zamindars* (landholders). He made little reduction in government revenue, but abolished various cesses levied by local officials. When the *zamindars* of a village declined to accept Cocks' assessment, he habitually threatened to appoint a revenue farmer. Although the threat alone usually brought recalcitrants to terms, at Divalpur "a Khutree, formerly a government servant and a regular lawyer," proved so obstinate that Cocks actually awarded the lease to a farmer. "When the owner perceived it was no joke, he became the most abject of creatures, prayed for



a restoration of his village, that he would willingly consent to my terms. It was too late. I felt an example was required."<sup>47</sup>

When qualified settlement officers became available, regular settlements were initiated. The average duration of a regular settlement was about twenty years.<sup>48</sup> Detailed information was collected to provide a basis for assessment. Village boundaries were drawn and village areas surveyed and mapped. Field maps and field indexes were prepared for each village. Every field on a map was numbered and under the corresponding number in the index was entered the field's extent, owner, occupant, soil type, crop, irrigation facilities, and rent.<sup>49</sup> Settlement officers studied the records of previous settlements and past collections, and considered such factors as character of cultivators, capacity of villages for improvement, and the state of markets. They consulted *Tahsildars* and knowledgeable agriculturists and conducted personal inspections. In order to ensure equitable distribution of demand, villages with common physical characteristics—such as high land, low land, or alluvial land—were grouped into assessment circles. Fairly uniform rates were adopted for each circle unless compelling reasons existed for local variations.

Settlement officers were not required to adhere rigidly to the one-half net produce rule, described as the maximum demand permissible rather than an unvarying proportion. Officers could not rely too heavily on produce estimates, because villagers combined to deceive government by perjury and by falsifying or suppressing accounts. In framing an assessment, settlement officers were expected to have regard for all the circumstances of a village. When in doubt, they were to remember that under-assessment was preferable to over-assessment because the latter, by affecting capacity to pay revenue, injured government. Robert Cust cautioned that revenue settlement was not an exact science and warned against excessive reliance on the "theories and gimcracks of the Settlement Officer, and the neat statistics and pretty maps of his office. . . ." <sup>50</sup>

A regular settlement involved not only an assessment but also an inquiry into the ownership of all agricultural land. In the British view, Punjabis were too ignorant to understand newly-conferred property rights and liable to damage the revenue by incessant land disputes. A record of "rights" was prepared for each village, listing the ownership of every plot.

Settlement officers were armed with judicial authority to try all cases involving title to land.

## V

Despite the lofty ideals preached by the "Punjab School," the provincial administration was limited by its human components. Failures in the system arose from two primary causes: corrupt practices in local subordinates and quarrels between European officers. Punjab officialdom recognized that, since non-Britons occupied all but topmost posts in the revenue system, an ever-present danger existed of indigenous "servants" combining to mislead and defraud their benefactors. R.N. Cust exhorted Collectors to be eternally vigilant because native employees required constant supervision and would tell superiors only what was pleasing. Excessive suspicion was, however, as deleterious to effective administration as undue trust. *Tahsildars* ought not to be fined or publicly censured for minor misconduct since blows to prestige weakened their authority.

Elaborate precautions were taken against dishonesty by Indian officials. "Character Books" at district headquarters contained a history of each employee's previous service, distinguished conduct, promotions, suspensions, and dismissals as well as a list of relatives resident in the district. An official's "Character Book" entry was always consulted before giving him a position in another district. Upon relinquishing office, a Deputy Commissioner left his successor a memorandum containing a candid appraisal of every district employee. The new Deputy Commissioner noted in his first annual report whether he concurred in his predecessor's evaluations. Uncovenanted servants were prohibited from engaging in trade within their district or becoming indebted to the district treasurer. British and Indians alike were forbidden to overdraw accounts with local bankers. All appointments in a district could not be filled by inhabitants of the district. Company officers were discouraged from having favorite subordinates at all and were not allowed to take favorites from district to district. One school of thought advocated periodic rotation of Indian personnel among the districts so as to break up cliques of relatives and webs of local influence. Cust stopped



short of endorsing regular transfers but urged Commissioners to shift "*amla*" frequently.<sup>51</sup>

Deputy Commissioners were expected to circumvent deceitful *amla* by circulating among the people in emulation of John Lawrence. He had "utterly confounded the tribe of flatters, sycophants, and informers who, when they get the opportunity, dog the steps of the Indian ruler."<sup>52</sup> Arthur Cocks was wont to ride unescorted through the countryside, believing that villagers would tell a *sahib* the truth when no Indian subordinates were about.<sup>53</sup>

In reality, district officers were less omniscient than they liked to fancy. Every civil servant was not cast in the heroic mold of John Lawrence, Herbert Edwardes, or John Nicholson. Moreover, even the hardest-driving officers could not verify every detail reported by subordinates. Despite Cocks' policy of transacting business in open *kutchery* (court) and mingling with the populace, the Jhang Settlement was well advanced before he discovered that subordinate officials had been accepting bribes.<sup>54</sup> While granting that landholders were not altogether truthful in revenue matters, British officers believed that *Sahibs* worthy of the name could easily penetrate the simple subterfuges of country folk. The rulers seriously underestimated the ability of revenue-payers to combine with *amla* to defraud government.

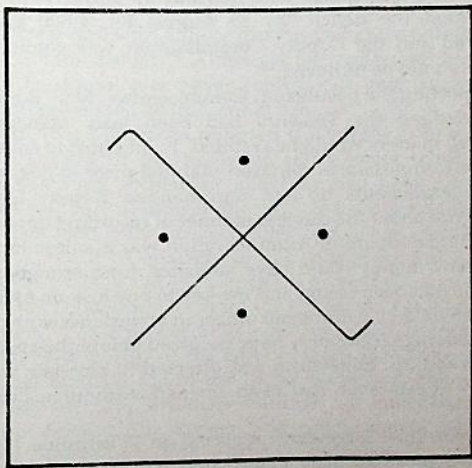
The Punjab Civil Service contained a high percentage of imperious individuals who frequently fell out among themselves. When a district officer and his superior became involved in a grudge fight, administrative paralysis ensued. On the one hand, Deputy Commissioner could employ his extensive powers to obstruct the wishes of higher authority. On the other hand, superiors could veto all objectionable acts by a district officer. Although the provincial government could break the deadlock by suspending an offender, such a drastic step was not to be undertaken lightly.

## VI

During the early years of British sway in Multan Division (Districts Multan, Gugeru and Jhang) two notable administrative malfunctions occurred. The first, in Multan District, involved fraud by indigenous subordinates. The second and far graver,

in Jhang, mingled corruption among *amla* with a violent personality clash between two British officers.

On 4 August 1852, Captain Farrington, newly-appointed Deputy Commissioner of Multan, accompanied outgoing Deputy Commissioner Ford on an inspection of the District Treasury. This was situated in Multan Fort, some distance from the main District offices. The double locks and tape on both the strongroom door and the specie chests within showed no signs of tampering; neither did the seals on the chests. Opening a box, the new Deputy Commissioner counted the coins in one of the money bags without finding anything amiss. Farrington then proceeded to feel the bottoms of other sacks until he detected coins smaller than the expected rupees in one, which he ordered taken out of the chest. Without waiting for this command to be obeyed, the Captain turned away to converse with another officer. At this instant, the Divisional Treasurer, Girdhari Shah, endeavored to switch bags. Chancing to suddenly whirl round, Farrington caught the Treasurer in the act and grabbed him by the wrist. A mysterious mark was then observed on the suspect bag:



Girdhari Shah (after the manner of Little Jack Horner) thrust in an arm and triumphantly withdrew a fistfull of Company's



rupees. The dogged Farrington, however, emptied the sack which proved to be packed with copper pice and bits of pice except for a thin top layer of silver rupees. Ten more bags bearing the telltale mark were opened and also found to contain mostly copper. The eleven sacks had been carefully made up to weigh the same as if full of silver. The Treasurer owned up to lifting Rs. 14,000; an exact count revealed a deficit of Rs. 14,568-1-8.<sup>55</sup>

Further investigation brought to light the embezzlement of an additional Rs. 16,609-2-2 by various means, including abstraction of revenue collections and sums deposited with the Treasurer as well as the diversion of pension payments in the form of treasury warrants from the intended recipients to Girdhari Shah. These defalcations had been possible primarily because revenue collections had been remitted in the form of bills on the District Treasury rather than in cash, thus permitting Girdhari Shah to conceal his shortages by juggling the bills. The remoteness of the Treasury from the other District offices also had aided the Treasurer greatly in his pilfering.<sup>56</sup>

Farrington confiscated all the Treasurer's property and commanded the individuals who had put up security for him to make good the deficit. By 19 August Rs. 4,500 had been recovered and the Deputy Commissioner was confident the balance would be retrieved.<sup>57</sup>

In reporting the peculation, Commissioner, M.P. Edgeworth acknowledged the Treasury had been laxly managed but promised matters would be rectified. In an effort to cover himself, the Commissioner declared that just prior to discovery of the embezzlements he had reprimanded Deputy Commissioner Ford about the careless manner of recording deposits.<sup>58</sup>

The Punjab Board of Administration was at a loss to understand how money could have vanished from strongboxes. If the locks had been sound and the key to one lock on each chest had been held by a European officer in accordance with regulations, pilferage could only have occurred before the specie had been locked up. Edgeworth was directed to ascertain whether treasure chests ever had been opened without a European present.<sup>59</sup>

Commissioner Edgeworth reported on 17 February 1853 that the entire loss had been made good. Girdhari Shah and his securors had cooperated fully: the Treasurer had admitted to previously no-undiscovered thefts and the securors had paid in

Rs. 722-13-4 more than necessary. This surplus had been refunded.<sup>60</sup>

It is evident from the above account that on paper there was no lack of checks and balances in the Punjab administration. The weakness seems to have lain in the laxity of its operatives. Surely without the remissness of several European officers, Girdhari Shah's legerdemain would have rivaled that of the legendary pickpocket who plied his trade in boxing gloves.<sup>61</sup>

During the course of the Multan Treasury fraud investigations, Commissioner Edgeworth suspected that the *Zillah* Treasurers of Jhang and Gugera, being underlings of Girdhari Shah, might be in on the plot. After instituting an inspection of the District Treasuries, he was pleased, and no doubt relieved, to report that everything was as it should be.<sup>62</sup> At this very time, however, *Zillah* Jhang was in the process of becoming the eye of a hurricane in a different and more widespread scandal, one that spawned a bitter conflict between two British civil servants.

H. Monckton was promoted over the heads of men with greater seniority to be Deputy Commissioner and Settlement Officer of Jhang. Contrary to normal practice, he was permitted to correspond with Lahore directly rather than through the Multan Commissioner.<sup>63</sup> Although the reason for such preferential treatment was never spelled out, one suspects that Monckton possessed an influential patron.

Early in 1854 Monckton reported unearthing, "an extensive system of fraud in the Kadirpur and Chiniot tehsils." The revised summary settlement allegedly had been tainted by large-scale bribery of indigenous officials to obtain light assessments. The facts only surfaced after conclusion of the settlement as a result of quarrels among village proprietors over sharing the costs of bribes. Monckton prosecuted a number of officials for conspiracy to defraud, extortion, embezzlement, and bribery. These proceedings were endorsed by then-Commissioner Edgeworth. At the end of March 1854 Edgeworth in his judicial capacity found the Jhang *sarishtidar*, Hidayat Ali, and the *naib* (deputy) *Sarishtidar*, Girdhari Lal, guilty of complicity in the frauds. The former was fired; sentencing of the latter was deferred pending further investigation.<sup>64</sup>

Major G.W. Hamilton became Commissioner of Multan in May 1854. Hamilton has already appeared in these pages as Diwan Mulraj's defense counsel in 1849. On this occasion he



had proved himself a shrewd legal tactician, exposing glaring weaknesses in Government's case.<sup>65</sup> John Login had remarked:

I told John Lawrence that if they expect to get a verdict against Moolraj, they had made a mistake when they gave him a Scotchman to defend him! Hamilton comes of a legal family; Mr. R. Hamilton, the Clerk of Sessions, is his uncle.<sup>66</sup>

More recently, he had served as Deputy Commissioner in Jhang and Multan. Hamilton's skill in controversy was to stand him in good stead in a running battle with the Deputy Commissioner of Jhang.

Major Hamilton, while not denying the existence of corruption in Jhang, maintained that Monckton had prosecuted the wrong men. There was ample room for disagreement owing to the contradictory nature of the evidence. Multan Division *amla* were split into two warring camps: local residents jostled with Hindustani newcomers who followed in the train of the Company's Raj. Members of the rival factions accused one another profusely, not only to harm enemies but also to divert suspicion from themselves. Siding with the local element, the Deputy Commissioner of Jhang claimed the Hindustanis were organized into a graft ring. For his part, the new Commissioner charged Monckton with obtaining convictions by means of perjury and forged documents.<sup>67</sup>

In July 1854 the Commissioner pitched his tents at Jhang and reopened cases which Monckton desired to keep closed. He also suspended the *thanadar* (police chief) of Jhang, Faiz Muhammad, who had been Monckton's right-hand man in investigating the bribery cases. The Deputy Commissioner reposed great confidence in the *thanadar* in the belief that as an Afghan he could not be in league with the Hindustani cabal.<sup>68</sup> Such direct intervention in district affairs by Hamilton contravened the principle that Commissioners should remain above the battle.

For the next two months Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner traded accusations and issued contradictory orders. The corruption issue became submerged in a personal vendetta. Correspondence generated by the controversy fills several fat files in the Lahore Archives. A perusal of these documents leaves the distinct impression that Hamilton had ample grounds for complaint. By his own admission, Monckton repeatedly flouted orders from his superior and spoke

discourteously to him.<sup>69</sup> In behavior suggestive of paranoia, the Deputy Commissioner reiterated improbable charges over and over. The Commissioner was alleged to be bent on destroying Monckton because his exposure of corruption in Jhang reflected upon Hamilton's tenure in that District. Hamilton was charged with defaming Monckton before the natives—a cardinal sin among *sahibs*—and with instigating *zamindars* to present petitions against the Deputy Commissioner.<sup>70</sup> The Hindustani *amla* of Jhang, Multan, and Punjab at large were said to be conspiring to bring down Monckton.<sup>71</sup> The Deputy Commissioner seems to have been a young man out to make a name for himself who reacted intemperately when thwarted.

Despite a reputation for decisiveness, Chief Commissioner John Lawrence<sup>72</sup> dealt gingerly with the Hamilton-Monckton imbroglio. In late July he admonished both parties to exercise mutual forbearance for the sake of the public good and their own reputations.<sup>73</sup> This chiding had no effect. Monckton was told in early August to cease direct correspondence with Lahore, but paid no heed.<sup>74</sup> Sensing a lack of support from his chief, Major Hamilton wrote plaintively of having "patiently borne rudeness, irritating language, and official opposition and—subjected myself to much inconvenience and exposure at an inclement season."<sup>75</sup>

As the weeks passed, Monckton's insubordination burgeoned till the Chief Commissioner was obliged to take strong action. In mid-September John Lawrence issued a decree: the Deputy Commissioner must either apologize to Major Hamilton or undergo suspension from office and investigation by a commission!<sup>76</sup> Upon receiving this ultimatum, Monckton tendered an apology and ceased his agitation.<sup>77</sup> The Chief Commissioner's hesitancy in moving against Monckton suggested that the latter possessed friends in high places. Whatever the reason, governmental inaction had allowed a paralyzing feud to drag on for two months.

A final verdict in the corruption cases came in January 1855, when the proceedings in thirteen cases against two officials—*naib sarishtidar* Girdhari Lal and the *tahsildar* of Kadirpur, Maulvi Khwajah Ahmed,—came before Judicial Commissioner Robert Montgomery for review.<sup>78</sup> Commissioner Hamilton had dismissed all the charges. After reviewing the proceedings, the Judicial Commissioner concluded there was no way the



accused could have been convicted on the evidence presented. The oral testimony for the prosecution broke down under cross examination and the documentary evidence appeared to have been fabricated. Several of the complainants admitted they had been intimidated into making false statements. Deputy Commissioner Monckton had entrusted preparation of the cases to *thanadar* Faiz Muhammad and an informer named Peera; this pair reportedly had forged many of the accounts presented in evidence in a tent where they conducted hearings. In Montgomery's opinion, if Monckton had more searchingly investigated these cases he would never have committed them for trial.<sup>79</sup>

The Jhang affair demonstrated that the most flexible administrative structure can break down under stress. Monckton's persistent insubordination provoked Hamilton into exceeding the supervisory role allotted Punjab Commissioners. The Commissioner descended upon Jhang and waged a war of attrition upon his subordinate. Hamilton ultimately triumphed, but at the cost of throwing district administration into turmoil.

The inconclusive results of the corruption probe highlighted the difficulty British officials encountered in delving into malfeasance by their indigenous underlings. Subordinates threw up a smokescreen of forgery and perjury, the task of obfuscation being greatly facilitated by the Hamilton-Monckton quarrel. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner backed opposing factions of *amla* in pursuit of their personal feud; each clique denounced the other to a sympathetic *sahib*; and confusion reigned supreme.

In the Punjab administration wide powers were entrusted to District Officers with a view to ensuring vigorous government tailored to local conditions. Somewhat contradictorily, a uniform revenue system based on abstract theories of property and of village communities was established. British officers sometimes relaxed their vigilance or fell out among themselves. On such occasions, indigenous subordinates combined to manipulate the governmental apparatus for their own advantage.

## NOTES

1. Percival Spear in V.A. Smith, *Oxford History of India* (3rd ed.), p. 656. S.S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 164-65.
2. Herbert Edwardes, quoted in Charles Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt in the North-Western Provinces of India* (London, 1858), pp. 35-36.
3. J. Lawrence, quoted in R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, I, 55.
4. Charles Raikes, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, I, pp. 49-50 (quoted).
5. *Ibid.*
6. Percival Spear, *Oxford History of India*, p. 656.
7. Diary entry of 30 October 1847, Cocks' Political Diaries, in *Political Diaries of the Assistants to the Resident at Lahore, 1846-49*, p. 433.
8. Diary entry of 14 October 1847 in *Political Diaries of the Assistants to the Resident at Lahore, 1846-49*, p. 430.
9. Punjab Government, *The Land of the Five Rivers: Being Vol. I of the Punjab Administration Report, 1921-22*, (2 vol. Lahore, 1923), I, 369. Punjab Administration Report, 1852-53, p. 114, Robert Needham Cust, *Manual for the Guidance of Revenue Officers in the Punjab* (Lahore, 1866), p. 204. Sir James Douie, *Punjab Land Administration Manual* (2nd. ed.; Lahore, 1931) p. 113. S.S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, p. 164.
10. Cust, *Manual for Revenue Officers*, p. 207.
11. Herbert Edwardes, quoted in Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt*, pp. 34-35.
12. Cust, *Manual for Revenue Officers*, pp. 205-06, 223-24, 239.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 207-16.
14. Despite the Charter Act of 1833, the Royal Proclamation of 1858, and the Civil Service Bill of 1861, built-in roadblocks such as holding the entrance examinations in London effectively excluded South Asians from the ranks of Covenanted Civil Servants. Three Bengalis qualified in 1869; one of seven South Asian candidates passed in 1870. See J. Royal Roseberry, *African Sloth, Oriental Stagnation, and the White Man's Burden* (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Duke University, 1966), pp. 77-81.
15. Cust, *Manual for Revenue Officers*, pp. 217, 230-33. As late as 1976 the post of office superintendent and the distinction between English and vernacular business still existed in Pakistan: at Multan the office superintendent had custody of the Deputy Commissioner's English files, while Urdu revenue records were the preserve of the *sadr qanungo*.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-42, 244. S.S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 167-68.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 242-44.
18. Percival Spear, *Oxford History of India*, p. 656. S.S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, p. 159.
19. Lumsden to Parents, Camp Peshawar, 15 April 1849, quoted in General Sir Peter Lumsden and G.R. Elsmie, *Lumsden of the Guides: A Sketch of the Life of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Burnett Lumsden, K.C.S.I., C.B. With Selections from his Correspondence and Occasional Papers* (London, 1899), p. 60.
20. Lumsden to Parents, Ludhiana, 8 August 1846, in *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
21. Henry Lawrence to Edwardes, 7 February 1849, IOR, Eur. Mss., E. 85/8, Letterbook, February-August 1849, No. 29, p. 24.
22. Henry Lawrence to Edwardes, 17 March 1849, *Ibid.*, Letterbook, February-August, 1849, No. 378, pp. 216-17.
23. Henry Lawrence to Lord Dalhousie, 29 March 1849, *Ibid.*, Letterbook,



- February-August 1849, No. 431, p. 254.
24. C. Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India, 1785 to 1849* (Lahore, 1929).
  25. Herbert Edwardes to Resident Frederic Currie, 24 June 1848, Ganda Singh (ed.), *Private Correspondence Relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars*, pp. 222-24.
  26. Edwardes to Currie, Camp, Suraj Kund, 23 October, 1848, *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.
  27. C. Grey, *European Adventurers*, p. 306.
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. H.L.O. Garrett, *A Brief History of the Old Police Battalions in the Punjab*, (Lahore, 1927), p. 14. Major Hugh Pearse (ed.), *Soldier and Traveller: Memoirs of Alexander Gardner, Colonel of Artillery in the Service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (London, 1898), p. 339.
  30. Henry Lawrence to Sir James Hogg, 6 March 1853, quoted in Thompson and Garrett, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, p. 389.
  31. Punjab Government, *Titled Gentlemen and Chiefs Other Than Ruling Chiefs* (Lahore: Civil Secretariat Press, 1878), pp. 12-13. Emma Edwardes, *Memoirs of Herbert Edwardes*, I, 113.
  32. Herbert Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, II, 312.
  33. Emma Edwardes, *Memorials of Edwardes*, I, 113.
  34. *Titled Gentlemen and Chiefs Other Than Ruling Chiefs*, p. 13.
  35. R.N. Cust, *Manual For Revenue Officers*, dedication.
  36. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.
  37. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5, 21.
  38. *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 24, 25, 34-37.
  39. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24, 33-34.
  40. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-54.
  41. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.
  42. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
  43. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
  44. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-31, 161-62, 200. See also Sir James Douie, *Punjab Land Administration Manual*, pp. 3-6, 17.
  45. Cust, *Manual for Revenue Officers*, pp. 65-66.
  46. *Ibid.*
  47. Cocks' Political Diaries, *Political Diaries of Assistants to Resident*, pp. 429-30, 432-33, 444.
  48. Although Cust states that settlements were made for 30 years, Gazetteers and Settlement Reports indicate that the average period of settlement was 20 years.
  49. Cust, *Manual for Revenue Officers*, pp. 58-59, 65-66, 71-72, 75-76.
  50. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74, 85.
  51. *Ibid.*, pp. 215, 216-17, 221-25, 227, 229.
  52. Charles Raikes, quoted in Bosworth Smith, *Lord Lawrence*, I, 49-50.
  53. Entry of 14 October 1847, Cocks' Political Diaries, *Assistants' Political Diaries*, p. 430.
  54. Entry of 10 December 1847, Cocks' Diaries, *Ibid.*, p. 440.
  55. Deputy Commissioner Farrington to Commissioner M.P. Edgeworth of Multan, 19 August 1852, National Archives of India, Government of India Foreign Political Proceedings, No. 150 of 1 October 1852, pp. 7-9.
  56. Farrington to Edgeworth, 19 August, 1852, No. 150, of 1 October 1852

- Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
- 57 *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.
58. Commissioner Edgeworth to Punjab Board of Administration, 20 August 1852, *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
59. P. Melville, Secretary to Board of Administration, to Edgeworth, 7 September 1852, *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
60. Edgeworth to G.F. Edmondstone, Financial Commissioner, 17 February 1853, NAI, Foreign Political Proceedings, No. 227 (B), Vol. 1248 of 18 March 1853, p. 650-51.
61. It is not clear from the official record whether Captain Farrington uncovered the fraud by rigorously following standard procedure—aided by a stroke of luck when the Treasurer gave himself away—or whether he had been tipped off in advance. If the latter were the case, the new Deputy Commissioner apparently probed till he found an anomaly, then lured Girdhari Shah into an indiscretion by ostentatiously turning his back.
62. Edgeworth to Board of Administration, 20 Aug. 1852, NAI, Foreign Political Proceedings. No. 150 of 1 Oct. 1852.
63. Keep-with of 15 Sept. 1854 by Chief Commissioner John Lawrence, Punjab Secretariat Record Office (Lahore), Punjab General Procds., Nos. 66-68 of 23 Sept. 1854. G.W. Hamilton, Commissioner Multan, to Richard Temple, Secretary Chief Commr., Camp Jhang, 20 Aug. 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 70-72 of 9 Sept. 1854.
64. H. Monckton, Deputy Commissioner, Jhang, to Commissioner Hamilton, 11 Aug. 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 70-72 of 9 Sept. 1854.
65. See, *Trial of Diwan Mul Raj*, pp. 15-19; 143-68.
66. Login to Mrs. Login, 10 June 1849, *Sir John Login and Duleep Singh*, p. 165. Login was himself a Scot.
67. Monckton to Hamilton, 11 Aug. 1854, PSRO, Punjab General Procds., Nos. 70-72 of 9 Sept. 1854. Monckton to Hamilton, 3 Aug. 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 115-16 of 5 Aug. 1854. Monckton to Hamilton, 28 Sept. 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 26-27 of 21 Oct. 1854. Hamilton to R. Temple, Secy. Chief Commr., 20 Aug. 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 70-72 of 9 Sept. 1854. Hamilton to Temple, 12 Sept. 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 60-65 of 7 Oct. 1854.
68. Monckton to Hamilton, 27 July 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 115-116½ of August 1854. Monckton to Punjab Judicial Commissioner Montgomery, 3 August 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 115-116½ of 5 August 1854. Monckton to Hamilton, 11 August 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 70-72 of 9 September 1854. Hamilton to Monckton, Camp Jhang, 29 July 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 115-116½ of 5 August 1854. Hamilton to R. Temple, 20 August 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 70-72 of 9 September 1854. The Commissioner held the *thanadar* responsible for corruption and disorganization in the Jhang police force. Faiz Muhammad admitted under questioning that he had prepared false bribery cases under orders from Monckton, but Monckton contended that the Commissioner had terrorized the *thanadar* into making a spurious confession.
69. Monckton to Hamilton, 11 August 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 70-72 of 9 Sept. 1854. Monckton to Richard Temple, 3 August 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 112-116 of 16 Sept. 1854. Monckton to Hamilton, 28 Sept. 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 26-27 of 21 October 1854.
70. Monckton to Hamilton, 11 August 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 70-72 of 9 Sept. 1854.
71. *Ibid.* Translation of Monckton's Vernacular Proceeding of 2 Sept. 1854



- enclosed in letter of 8 Sept. 1854 from Commissioner Hamilton to Judicial Commissioner Montgomery, *Ibid.*, No. 6-65 of 7 October 1854.
72. In 1853 the Board of Administration, whose three members were jointly responsible for governing, was replaced by a Chief Commissioner in sole charge. Beneath the Chief Commissioner stood a Financial Commissioner and a Judicial Commissioner. Henry Lawrence having been forced out by Lord Dalhousie, John Lawrence became the first Chief Commissioner.
  73. Judicial Commissioner Montgomery to Commissioner Hamilton, 5 August 1854, Punjab General Proceedings, Nos. 115-116½ of 5 August 1854.
  74. PSRO, Montgomery to Deputy Commissioner Monckton, *Ibid.*, Nos. 115-116½ of 5 August 1854.
  75. Hamilton to Richard Temple, 20 August 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 70-72 of 9 September 1854.
  76. Keep-with by John Lawrence of 15 September 1854, Richard Temple to Commissioner Hamilton, 19 September 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 66-68 of 23 September 1854. The Chief Commissioner observed that he had never seen anything as objectionable as a vernacular proclamation issued by Monckton on 2 September. The Deputy Commissioner accused Hamilton of confining witnesses in the bribery cases and of using "third degree" methods to make them incriminate Monckton. The Commissioner's tactics allegedly had thrown the entire District into confusion and caused crowds of complainants to besiege Monckton's residence.
  77. Monckton to Hamilton, 28 September 1854, *Ibid.*, Nos. 26-27 of 21 October 1854. In his apology the Deputy Commissioner got in parting shot at Hamilton, declaring that he could view the dispute more dispassionately now that the Commissioner had departed Jhang.
  78. Sample charges included: accepting bribes during the summary settlement to lighten the land revenue assessments; accepting bribes (including a camel worth Rs. 70) to lighten the *tirmi* (tax on livestock grazing in Government waste) assessments; taking a bribe of Rs. 32 plus two goats worth Rs. 5 from one party in a court case over some date trees; and collecting one anna per acre more than the Government revenue demand from a particular village.
  79. Robert Montgomery, Judicial Commr., Punjab, to R. Temple, Secy Chief Commr., 13 Jan. 1855, PSRO, Punjab Judicial Procds., No. 16 of 4 Nov. 1855.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### **Trial and Error: The Initial Phase of Imperial Administration in Multan, 1849-1857**

"The country is poor, and the revenue is not, on the whole, flourishing." — Description of Multan Division, Punjab Government, *Punjab Administration Report*, 1852-53, p. 114.

The Company's record in Multan between Annexation and the Sepoy Revolt was mixed. A district administrative structure was created and measures were initiated to control the unruly nomads of the interior. At the same time, serious errors were committed in the crucial areas of revenue settlement and canal management.

#### I

In 1849 Multan District took shape from the richest territories of old Multan Province. Rebel garrisons were expelled and the Company's Daudputra allies were politely shown the door. In the sphere of local administration, the *talukas* of the previous government were replaced by larger *tahsils*.

After the fall of Multan City on 2 January 1849, Herbert Edwardes, senior political officer with Company forces, was made responsible for administration of conquered territory. He despatched his deputy Lieutenant Hugh James of the Bombay Army, with a column to Sirdarpur, Serai Sidhu, and Tulumba in the north-western corner of future Multan District. Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani, described by Edwardes as "an able man, thoroughly acquainted with the country," supported James with a body of irregulars. James was under instructions



to replace Mulraj's *kardars* and *thanas* (garrisons) with officials and troops belonging to Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, the Company Political Agent in Jhang. Insurgent officers were to be imprisoned, but members of the "common herd" were to be released upon promising to go straight home. They would be allowed to take nothing but the clothes on their backs and should be warned to expect no mercy if again caught in arms. James was to report on the condition of the country, the extent to which inhabitants had been plundered and by whom, and how much *kharif* revenue the foe had collected.<sup>1</sup>

James evidently accomplished his mission. In a letter of 19 January 1849 to the Resident, Henry Lawrence, Edwardes recommended an immediate revenue settlement for Multan and requested that Lieutenant James be seconded from the Bombay Government in order to conduct the assessment. Edwardes professed to be too busy to undertake a settlement, which would require undivided attention by a European officer for several months.<sup>2</sup> The Resident disapproved of a new settlement while the country was still in turmoil but reported to the Government of India that James was needed in Multan in order to superintend collection of revenue. At a request from the Government of India, Bombay somewhat grudgingly dispensed with James' services.<sup>3</sup>

The administration of Multan could not be placed on a sound footing until the status of Bahawalpur-held tracts in the south of the District was settled. Nawab Bahawal Khan III hoped to be ceded the territory, which his troops had occupied during the war, as reward for aiding the Company. On 27 February 1848, Edwardes solicited permission to put *kardars* into the above territory and to collect *rabi* revenue therefrom. If the Government felt obliged to yield some territory, Edwardes hoped that other land would be substituted as the Nawab's conquests included the richest portions of Multan Province.<sup>4</sup> In early April Henry Lawrence informed the Government of India that his predecessor Frederic Currie had not promised the Nawab any territory. The Resident recommended that the Bahawalpur holdings be taken over, but proposed a monetary reward for the Nawab.<sup>5</sup>

Governor-General Dalhousie rejected the idea of a cession of territory, deeming it "neither necessary nor politic to increase the power of other princes." Moreover, handing over Company subjects to a badly-governed Native State would not be just.

"Conquest has its duties as well as its powers and rights—And since we have been compelled to conquer the Punjab, it is, I conceive, our duty to ensure so far as we may that the change of governments should be for the benefit of new subjects." Dalhousie awarded Bahawal Khan a life pension of a lakh of rupees annually.<sup>6</sup>

The Governor-General's position was consistent with his conception of British mission in India. Convinced of the superiority of Western over "native" institutions, he had declared "that in the exercise of a wise and sound policy the British Government is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves."<sup>7</sup> Although historians often attributed Dalhousie's annexations to a desire to extend the blessings of British rule, his remark about the unwisdom of augmenting Bahawalpur strength suggested that the Governor-General regarded Native States as political threats.

The newly-constituted Punjab Board of Administration apprised Bahawal Khan on 23 April 1849 that he was to hand over occupied territory in Districts Multan and Khangarh (future Muzaffargarh). The Board took the line—which may well have been news to the Nawab—that it had been mutually understood from the outset that he was merely holding those territories in trust for the Company. The Nawab was to forbid his *kardars* to collect anything on the current *rabi* harvest and was to instruct them to make up accounts from the day of occupation to close of the last *kharif*. Accounts would be presented to Lieutenant James at Multan in presence of the Nawab's *vakil* (representative). Bahawal Khan was urged to make haste as it was late in the year for collection of *rabi* revenues. As a sweetener, the Board announced that the Nawab was to receive a pension and Rs. 600,000 to pay expenses of the six months' Multan campaign. The expense money was not as munificent a gift as first appears, since no cash changed hands. The sum was to be deducted from Bahawalpur collections in conquered areas and any surplus collections were to be refunded to the Company.<sup>8</sup> Bowing to the inevitable, Bahawal Khan expressed gratitude for the reward and pulled back across the Sutlej.<sup>9</sup>

In a communication of 23 April 1849, the Board instructed Hugh James, now in charge at Multan, to waste no time in



taking control of Bahawalpuri holdings in Multan and Khangarh and to make the best arrangements possible for realizing *rabi* revenue. James was made responsible for Khangarh because the officer assigned to that district could not arrive for at least fifteen days. Revenue would be lost by a change in administrations late in the *rabi* season, but the Board was prepared to sacrifice in order to put an end to division of authority in Multan District. James was to go over Bahawalpuri *kardars'* accounts, credit the Nawab with war costs, and report balances to Lahore for final adjustment.<sup>10</sup>

Elimination of Bahawalpur authority west of the Sutlej rounded out the boundaries of District Multan. Some 5900 square miles in area, the *zillah* (district) consisted of the most fertile segment of former Multan Province: an irregular triangle lapped by the rivers Sutlej, Chenab, and Ravi. As a compact area of settled agriculture with well-defined river boundaries (except for a gap to the north-east between the Ravi and the Sutlej), the district made a logical administrative unit. Indeed, borders have remained essentially unchanged down to the present (1986).<sup>11</sup>

By the close of 1849, the eighteen *kardaris* or *talukas* of Sikh times had been consolidated into five *tahsils*. *Talukas* Tulamba, Sidhnai, Serai Sidhu, and Sardarpur were fused into *Tahsil* Serai Sidhu; *talukas* Ghazipur, Bahadarpur, and Sardarwah (villages along the Sardarwah Canal) were joined to make *Tahsil* Lodhran; *talukas* Kahrur, Mailsi, Khai, and Tibbah were united in *Tahsil* Mailsi. The foregoing *talukas* consisted of circles of contiguous villages. On the other hand, the *talukas* of *Tahsils* Multan and Shujabad were aggregations of scattered villages, being based upon the non-contiguous *jagirdari* holdings of Pathan Nawabs and nobility.<sup>12</sup>

## II

Historically, powerful pastoral tribes of Multan and neighboring districts had posed a serious law and order problem. Nomadic inhabitants of the high, arid *bar* incessantly raided each other and the settled population. In 1832 envoys from the Kharal tribe of Montgomery District to the court of Ranjit Singh described their mode of life to Captain C.M. Wade,

Company representative at Lahore:

... mostly they lived on milk and took very little of grain  
... the Captain Sahib asked them how many buffaloes  
had each of those Zamindars and they stated that some-  
times 100, sometimes 200, and sometimes more than that.  
After that the Captain Sahib asked them how they did  
discover if any of the buffaloes went astray. They stated  
that they did so by tracing out and following the foot-  
prints.<sup>13</sup>

These Kharrals were "a race inured to every hardship, ill fed and worse clothed, but capable of enduring great fatigue under every privation. They are much celebrated for the length and rapidity of their journeys on foot in their nightly excursions to carry off cattle from neighboring territories."<sup>14</sup> In 1847 John Nicholson depicted the denizens of Multan and Jhang as "universally robbers, graziers, and trackers, or a combination of them all, now feeding their flocks, now stealing their neighbors'; and then again with extraordinary skill, following the footprints of their own, or those of their friends, that have been stolen."<sup>15</sup>

Pastoral clans feuded perpetually owing to the custom of avenging an insult or injury upon any neighbors or kin of the offending party who came within reach. For some years prior to Annexation political factors had intensified the strife. As the Sikh Raj and Bahawalpur were on unfriendly terms, tribes raided back and forth across the Sutlej without fear of pursuit or punishment. Officers of the two states aided and abetted marauders in exchange for shares of booty. "Instead of a few buffaloes stealthily abstracted during the night by ten or twelve herdmen, villages are now openly attacked and plundered at noon-day by gangs of from one hundred to two hundred desperate free-booters acting under acknowledged *Sir-kurde* (leaders)."<sup>16</sup> After Mulraj's cession of Jhang to the Durbar in 1846, "bad characters" took advantage of ill-feeling between the Diwan and Lahore officials to launch forays across the Multan-Jhang boundary.<sup>17</sup>

Previous to Annexation, the nomadic peoples had defied all attempts at conquest. Punitive expeditions were unable to bring the mobile pastoralists to battle and found no property to seize or destroy, for the enemy's wealth consisted entirely of livestock. When closely pressed, tribes went to ground in



marshy jungles of brushwood and tall grass fringing the rivers. Sawan Mal had held the nomads in check but had been unable to subdue them completely.<sup>18</sup> The Diwan employed certain *bar* clans, such as the Daha Rajputs of Khanewal in northern Multan, to control the rest. Ziadat Khan Daha was entrusted with suppressing dacoity, for which he received one-fourth of the value of the stolen goods recovered.<sup>19</sup>

To hold pastoral tribes in check, the Company cast a net of police posts across the sparsely populated interiors of Districts Multan, Gugera, and Jhang. In 1853 the Government of India sanctioned construction of the following police buildings in Multan Division:

- (1) *Multan District*. Two combination *tahsil* headquarters and *thana* (police station) structures; five *thanas*; and twenty-four police outposts (*chaukis*).
- (2) *Gugera*. Five *tahsil-thanas*; four *thanas*; and twenty *chaukis*.
- (3) *Jhang*. Three *tahsil-thanas*; four *thanas*; and seventeen *chaukis*.<sup>20</sup>

Numerous police establishments were considered necessary in the *bar*, described by Judicial Commissioner Robert Montgomery as a region of few villages and "a large nomad population who reside in the jungles and are almost wholly uncontrollable." Posts were sited to protect main lines of communication: the Multan-Sind and Multan-Bahawalpur roads, as well as a projected new, shorter Multan-Lahore road. Eight *chaukis* were to cover the Multan District segment of the new Multan-Lahore road. Other posts would guard planned roads from Jhang to Delhi via the Sutlej ferry at Pak Pattan and from Jhang to Ferozepur, an important town on the east bank of the Sutlej. *Thana* and *tahsil* buildings were combined in several instances both to save money and because the nomads were deemed unlikely to respect a revenue authority unaccompanied by a display of force.<sup>21</sup>

This unprecedented broadcasting of the minions of the law was received by the populace with something less than unrestrained joy. Interestingly, the brand new uniforms of the constabulary came in for derision almost equal to that of the wearers thereof. To allegorize this distaste of both wearer and worn there was created or revived a proverb combining two creatures one imaginary, the other real, to epitomize physical revulsion: "An ugly witch to start with and she rides a

hyena."<sup>22</sup> The double entendre inherent in the witch's character (a witch could steal one's liver without his knowing it), associated with the fact that recourse to demonology was necessary to find comparison, suggests a past experience with policemen of nightmarish proportions. Certainly what humor was present had to be of the grim variety.

### III

The early years of imperial rule in Multan witnessed two Summary Revenue Settlements. Neither took adequate account of local conditions and previous revenue history. Both caused considerable distress and had to be cancelled.

In 1849, Deputy Commissioner Hugh James settled *Tahsils* Shujabad, Lodhran, and Mailsi, while Commissioner Matthew P. Edgeworth settled Serai Sidhu and four of six *tarafs* (subdivisions) in *Tahsil* Multan. James' successor as Deputy Commissioner, Morrison, settled the remaining Multani *tarafs*. Assessment circles were not formed everywhere, but in some places villages were classified for the purpose of receiving reductions into those directly benefited by rivers and those indirectly benefited; those with good well land and with poor well land. No effort was made to measure cultivation or ascertain normal produce. Settlement officers used, as a basis, average collections of the previous four years, struck off all cesses and granted reductions to villages which were obviously suffering. In *Tahsil* Multan, reductions ranged from 10 to 24 per cent; in Shujabad from 14 to 20 per cent; in Lodhran from 11 to 21 per cent; in Mailsi from 15 to 25 per cent; and in Serai Sidhu from 10 to 20 per cent. This district *jama* (revenue demand) totalled Rs. 580,601. In 1850 the Board of Administration sanctioned the assessment for three years.<sup>23</sup>

The First Summary Settlement quickly proved unworkable, even though the Board had considered it unduly light. Since the former regime had taken a share of actual crops in kind or cash equivalent, an average of four years' collections was highly misleading. Reductions did not compensate for the difference between an inelastic demand and a demand tied to the size of harvests. Moreover, settlement officers had overestimated the cash value of past collections. Produce rates entered in old records were artificially high, landholders



having been compelled to buy back the state's share of the crop at inflated prices. To make matters worse, agricultural prices fell sharply throughout Punjab following Annexation.<sup>24</sup> The limited supply of money available in an economy still largely based upon non-cash exchange was inadequate to satisfy the inflexible cash demands of the new revenue system; moreover, rapid deflation occurred as agriculturists dumped grain on the market in an effort to raise cash. Overproduction helped drive prices down when men of the disbanded *Khalsa* army returned to their ancestral calling of agriculture.<sup>25</sup> Abolition of cesses did not benefit all lands equally. Much of the revenue on well lands, which were assessed in cash, had consisted of miscellaneous cesses, whereas few cesses had been levied on holdings paying in kind. Accordingly, the new assessment pressed too heavily on river and canal areas and not heavily enough on wells. Lastly, the Summary Settlement did not make adequate provision for remissions in event of river encroachments or canal failure. In 1852 the Board of Administration was compelled to authorize large remissions of 10 to 20 per cent in Shujabad *Tahsil* and order a Second Summary Settlement.<sup>26</sup>

Major G.W. Hamilton, who was Deputy Commissioner from February 1853 to May 1854, resettled Shujabad and Lodhran. His successor H.B. Henderson dealt with the other *Tahsils*. Cultivated areas were measured and the following assessment circles organized: *khadar* (lowland) circles of riverbank villages, *mashmulah* (intermediate) circles of villages further inland, and *bangar* (upland) circles of villages farthest from rivers. Within circles, villages were sub-classified according to irrigation methods; and sub-classes were further divided on the basis of soil characteristics. Government's share of produce was set at 1/4 on *sailab* (inundated) and canal lands and 1/5 on well lands. Sugar cane and indigo crops were assessed 1/5, except in *bangar* circles, where on high ground 1/6 of the former and 2/11 of the latter were taken owing to the difficulty of irrigation.

Settlement officers conducted experiments to determine the yield of each grade of soil in an effort to calculate the cash value of Government's share. After weighing opinions of prominent landholders and experienced indigenous officials concerning the cash estimates, Hamilton and Henderson devised a scale of revenue rates and based their assessments on the result obtained by applying said rates to the several categories of land

in each village. Major Hamilton departed from this scale of rates when personal observation and intuition led him to a different appraisal of a village's capacity to pay. Since rivers constantly washed away and added land, *sailab* tracts were to be assessed by annual measurements rather than assigned a fixed *jama*. Revenue demand was lowered by 17 per cent in Lodhran where the first assessment had collapsed completely; elsewhere reductions in river villages were more than offset by enhancements on wells. In *Tahsil* Multan the overall increase amounted to 14 per cent, in Shujabad to almost 3 per cent, in Mailsi to 2.6 per cent, and in Serai Sidhu to 13 per cent. The revised district assessment came to Rs. 578,163, slightly less than the previous *jama*.<sup>27</sup>

The *Punjab Administration Report of 1852-53* expressed satisfaction that resettlement of country bordering the Ravi and Chenab, unlike most revisions, had resulted in no loss of revenue. "This settlement was made on accurate data (approaching in completeness those prepared for the regular settlement), and was in itself quite moderate. The villages were flourishing, and the canal cultivation luxuriant."<sup>28</sup> Self-congratulation by Government was premature. Enhancements in four out of the five *tahsils* had been unwarranted. Redistribution of the old *jama* of each *Tahsil* more equitably would have been a wiser course.<sup>29</sup> Conceivably, settlement officers had been under pressure from Government not to reduce overall district revenue and had been obliged to compensate for unavoidable reductions in Lodhran by increases elsewhere.

The Second Summary Settlement contained other flaws. Canal lands were assessed too heavily in view of the uncertainties of water supply; annual measurements of *sailab* cultivation were sabotaged by a simple yet ruinous error. The Deputy Commissioner neglected to fix rates of assessment and underlings in charge of measurements assessed each village at the rate at which Second Summary Settlement *jama* fell on cultivated area of the year of settlement. Rates thus obtained varied considerably because the *jama* was based upon estimates of average cultivation. One village might be assessed three annas per acre, while a neighboring village was charged two or three rupees per acre for the same type of land. The Second Summary Settlement did not result in many revenue arrears but J.H. Morris, who conducted the First Regular Settlement (1857-1860), encountered "everywhere great



complaint and discontent, and in some villages much actual suffering. Most of the villages had proved quite unable to bear the enhancements of the 2nd Summary Settlement . . . '30

The Summary Settlements compared unfavourably with Sawan Mal's arrangements in both yield and fairness. John Lawrence had viewed Multan Province as something of an El Dorado which could be made to render up Rs. 700,000 to Rs. 800,000 yearly beyond Rs. 2,200,000 paid to the Durbar.<sup>31</sup> Had his forecast proved accurate, Multan District, whose constituent territories had paid Rs. 1,035,000 *per annum* in Sikh days,<sup>32</sup> would have paid the Company approximately Rs. 1,400,000 yearly. Instead, the Summary Settlement *jamias* amounted to little more than half of what the *Nazims* had paid to Lahore. Moreover, the new regime's assessments caused great distress whereas Sawan Mal's had been noted for their mildness. By 1853 the gleam of El Dorado had faded. The *Punjab Administration Report* for that year stressed the poverty of Multan Division, the unsatisfactory state of the revenue, and the propensity of agriculturists to abscond to Bahawalpur at the slightest difficulty.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the official disposition to blame barren country and fickle cultivators, flaws in the new revenue policy were primarily responsible for the revenue problems of Multan.

Agriculture was subject to major vicissitudes: rivers frequently changed course and canals often dried up or silted up. Sawan Mal's assessments geared to size of the crop had been better suited to local conditions than fixed demands. The *Nazim* had possessed adequate cash reserves to pay annual tribute to the central government in a bad year without the necessity of collecting the entire sum. Profits in good years had more than made up the losses in poor seasons.<sup>34</sup>

The defects of Multan revenue administration were duplicated in neighboring Muzaffargarh District, which underwent three Summary Settlements (1850, 1853 and 1862). The First Settlement was based upon Sawan Mal's average collections. Although lower than the Diwan's average take, the inflexible demand "proved to be more than the cultivators could pay in good and bad seasons alike, and in the two later summary settlements it was considerably reduced . . . Reductions notwithstanding, "the time of the summary settlements is remembered as one of great misery because, although the demand was low, the method of assessment was wrong, and

from this period date most of the Government *rakhs* (forest preserves) which stud the district, and are estates abandoned by the owners."<sup>35</sup>

Details of the First Regular Settlement of Multan (1857-60) are beyond the scope of this chapter, but one controversy associated with this assessment is relevant here because it demonstrated the tenacity with which high officials clung to concepts imported from the North-Western Provinces. The Commissioner, G.W. Hamilton, urged that joint responsibility for payment of revenue not be generally enforced, pointing out that village communities existed only along rivers. In most of the District, cultivators dwelt on small well-centered plots scattered across the waste and had no connection with inhabitants of adjoining wells. Hamilton favored assessing each well separately as had been the custom under previous government.<sup>36</sup> Hamilton was familiar with South-West Punjab, having been Multan Divisional Commissioner since 1854 and prior to that, Deputy Commissioner in both Jhang and Multan.

The Financial Commissioner, R.N. Cust (1821-1909), though an experienced revenue officer, lacked first-hand knowledge of the arid south-western districts. He had held positions in Ambala District, Hoshiarpur District, Benares District, Lahore Division, and Amritsar Division—all regions of rain-based agriculture and fixed village communities.<sup>37</sup> Cust rejected Hamilton's views because "divergence from fixed principles at this period would leave a permanent trace and hamper the Deputy Commissioner in his collections."<sup>38</sup> Moreover, elimination of joint responsibility would lead to a *ryotwari* system of settlement with individual landholders, which Cust opposed. In the view of the Financial Commissioner, joint responsibility constituted the main bulwark of village communities, institutions which nurtured the virtues of solidarity, good-fellowship, and resistance to outside pressures.<sup>39</sup>

Cust optimistically regarded Multani well-holders as:

the pioneers of civilization, the squatters of the primeval forest. Gradually, however, the ramparts of a municipality will be formed around them; we have now given them a defined village area, and a joint property in the jungle, to the exclusion of others. The owners of patches and wells are represented by headmen. The ties of fellowship and mutual advantage will draw them together; the law of joint-reponsibility will bring with it the law



of pre-emption. As cultivation, population, and wealth extend, these infant communities will develop themselves on one of the well-known types—perhaps streaked by some local peculiarities. Such has been the mode by which in the old settled tracts of the Ganges Valley the village community had come into existence, and by an innate vitality has survived empires and dynasties.<sup>40</sup>

Cust's grandiose predictions contrasted sharply with his declaration elsewhere that the English could no more change Indians' institutions than their language or clothes.<sup>41</sup> Circles of wells were arbitrarily declared to be villages and the inhabitants made jointly responsible for revenue; nonetheless village communities failed to coalesce. At the time of the Second Regular Settlement (1874-1880), most Multani "villages" consisted of collections of wells whose occupants lacked a sense of community.<sup>42</sup> Cust to the contrary, governments could not create communities by fiat. Village brotherhoods of the sub-continent were cemented together by internal bonds, most frequently a shared belief in descent from a common ancestor. Outside authorities could not supply such bonds where none existed.

#### IV

Agriculture in Multan depended almost entirely upon an extensive network of inundation canals flooded by the rivers from April through September. The rivers began to rise in mid-April with melting of Himalayan snows and received additional impetus from the monsoon of July-August in north-eastern Punjab. Canal mouths were generally situated on side creeks rather than directly on rivers, because silt precipitated in still waters and because the current of the main channel quickly eroded canal heads. This tendency of rivers to shift made canal upkeep extremely difficult. Construction of masonry headworks was impracticable, since headworks, though preventing erosion, availed nothing when a river moved away and left sand bars blocking the mouth of a canal or creek. In such cases bars had to be cut through or new heads excavated elsewhere. The Sutlej shifted course more frequently than the Chenab.

Generally, for several miles after leaving a river canals

followed old stream beds or gullies leading off from the river at a shallow angle, but then turned more sharply inland through artificial channels. Main canals threw off branches which branched in turn, covering the country with a veinous network. Canals were easily excavated in the soft alluvial soil, dirt being thrown to either side to form banks. These earthen banks, strengthened by plantings of trees, usually sufficed to keep canals within bounds. In low areas, banks were reinforced by *bunds* or levees, without which most of Multan and Shujabad *Tahsils* would have been under water in flood time.

Persian wheels (*jhalars*) conveyed water to fields when a canal was below the level of surrounding country. When fields were on a level with or lower than a canal, small water courses (*kassis*) were employed. On occasion fields were flooded by breaking the embankments, but the government usually forbade the practice because it weakened the banks. Contrary to what might be expected, lands nearest canal heads were not always most favored. Owing to alluvial deposits, lands close to rivers were frequently higher than the canals and had to be irrigated by *jhalars*. At canal tails, fields lay at canal level and were irrigated by overflow (*paggu*). Thus, in years of ample water, cultivators at the end of a canal could irrigate with less labor and expense than cultivators near the mouth. By way of compensation, holdings close to canal heads received the bulk of water in years of limited supply.<sup>43</sup>

Major canals had been excavated by former governments or by powerful landholders with government assistance. At Annexation 14 canals irrigated the Chenab side of the District and 20 the Sutlej side.<sup>44</sup> The Wali Muhammad and Sikanderwah were the outstanding Chenab works. The former, constructed *circa* 1760, was some 30 miles in length. Skirting the western side of Multan City, the Wali Muhammad gave water to 50 villages by means of 319 Persian wheels and 138 water courses. The Sikanderwah, about 30 miles in length, irrigated 31 villages through 139 *jhalars* and 198 *kassis*. On the Sutlej, the Diwanwah and Sirdarwah were the most prominent canals. The Diwanwah, excavated at the behest of Diwan Sawan Mal, left the river near Lodhun, extended 35 miles into the heart of the *bar*, and watered 66 villages by means of 251 *jhalars* and 8 *kassis*. The Sirdarwah, 38 miles in length, traversed an important indigo-producing region. Twenty-four



villages took water from the canal through 263 *jhalars* and 65 *kassis*.<sup>45</sup>

Canals became clogged in a few years if not cleared of silt annually. Embankments had to be repaired, sand banks removed, and new canal heads excavated. Maintenance work was performed in the winter months of low water. The Sikh authorities had required landholders on the canals to furnish labor. Each December *kardars* decided how many *corvée* laborers (*chers*) would be needed and fixed the quota due from each landholder. Sometimes quotas were proportional to the number of a *zamindar's* wells or yokes of bullocks, but most commonly a certain number of *chers* had been assessed for each Rs. 100 worth of produce raised on irrigated land during the previous year. Rather than serving in person, *zamindars* sent tenants as *chers*. Prestigious classes such as Sayyids were exempted from providing laborers. *Chers* usually served for two months and received approximately Rs. 3 monthly for living expenses from their masters. In theory *zamindars* failing to make quotas were subject to a fine of two annas per day for every absent worker. Income from *naghah*, as the fine was called, went to hire substitute laborers and pay a small staff which superintended work and looked for places in need of repair. Government kept any surplus *naghah*. In practice, *naghah* was seldom accepted because officials valued a full complement of *chers* at the right time more highly than money. Defaulting *zamindars* were beaten until they furnished their quotas and *chers* were forbidden to leave work. The system of forced labor, closely supervised by *kardars*, who were in turn watched by the Nazim, kept the canals in good order.<sup>46</sup>

The six *tarafs* around Multan City did not supply laborers, paying instead a water rate (*abiana*) of from one to five rupees per Persian wheel. Wells using canal water also paid *abiana*. Well owners normally irrigated from canals during the flood season, this being easier than lifting water out of wells. Each well was charged one rupee for the *rabi* season, whether or not any canal water was used before the supply failed, and during the *kharif* two rupees per watering up to six waterings, after which there was no extra charge. *Abiana* yielded Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000 in revenue yearly.<sup>47</sup>

In January 1849, Herbert Edwardes ordered the canals cleared and repaired. Action was imperative; the war had

prevented annual clearances and British engineers had stopped up the mouths of canals in the environs of Multan City. On 5 February, Edwardes inspected work on the Wali Muhammad and discovered that, through an error, orders for clearances had gone only to villages along upper portions of the canal, though silt deposits were worst near its mouth. Edwardes corrected the omission and placed Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani, the irrigation veteran who had excavated the Diwanwah, in charge of District canals.<sup>48</sup> As a stopgap measure to prevent rupture of embankments during floods, Hugh James, who succeeded Edwardes, employed Ghulam Mustafa as Canal Superintendent for three months during the hot weather of 1849. Assisted only by a small staff, the Pathan substantially reduced crop losses.<sup>49</sup>

Hugh James, in September 1849, submitted proposals for a permanent system of canal administration. James strongly depreciated entrusting Multan canals to a separate department of government, contending the Canal Department should confine itself to large-scale irrigation projects requiring European science to construct. He urged "continuance of the old system under stricter supervision, and with greater liberality in advances. The light of native experience will suffice to guide us here, and let science fertilize the Bar." Inundation canals were simple works which irrigators were quite capable of maintaining. Direct management by government engineers excluded participation by those who knew most about canals and had the strongest interest in ensuring a steady water supply. Government should limit itself to a supervisory role for which an efficient Native staff under the District Officer would suffice. Government representatives would set quotas of *cher* workers; see that clearances were carried out in a timely manner; oversee repairs to weak places in embankments; and, ensure equitable distribution of water. James cited his experience as a Collector in Sind where canals were under a separate department. The Canal Department had often promised to clear out the channels in his district, only to inform him at the end of the cool season that it could not do the work that year. James then had to scramble frantically to assemble laborers, but was unable to complete work before the water rose.<sup>50</sup>

Examination of Hugh James' proposals reveals that he did not actually advocate turning canals over to "the people." He reserved a preponderant role for government. His real purpose



was to keep canals under District Officers and out of the hands of the Punjab Canal Department. Although James cloaked his recommendations in the rhetoric of local self-government, his basic position was sound. Events were to prove that Multani canals were better off under District revenue authorities than under professional engineers. The former had a direct interest in keeping the water flowing and could if necessary call upon forced labor to perform repairs. The latter had to submit budget estimates for approval by higher authority, a time-consuming bureaucratic process. Also engineers often devised grandiose schemes requiring several years to implement.

James recommended generous government advances for extension of existing canals. Increased land revenue resulting from expanded cultivation would repay initial investment after a few seasons. Imposition of a water rate was inadvisable because the people resented having to pay anything on canals which they repaired themselves.<sup>51</sup>

Dry river beds could be utilized as channels for new canals. The old bed of the Dhumuk river in north-eastern Multan could be converted into a canal by digging a channel from the Sutlej three miles distant, at a cost of less than Rs. 10,000 and probably no more than Rs. 7,000. The project would bring thirty square miles of land under cultivation and reclaim a population of predatory herdsmen. James suggested a scheme of colonization based on Sawan Mal's policy for populating land on the Diwanwah canal. The waste would be surveyed in plots ranging from 100 to 1000 *bigahs* in area (50 to 500 acres), an assessment to run for five years would be fixed for each estate, and colonists would be invited to take up leases. Local inhabitants who claimed proprietary rights in an estate would have first option to lease, but would get no compensation.<sup>52</sup>

Hugh James' proposals for colonization of waste resembled policies which Government was to adopt a generation later in the great Canal Colonies of south-western Punjab. James in turn freely acknowledged his debt to Sawan Mal, who thus may be considered the godfather of the Canal Colonies.

In advocating canals as a means of taming nomads, Lieutenant James touched upon a favorite theme of Punjab administrators. Canals were not only a device to augment revenue, but also an instrument of political control. Once induced to settle down, nomads would be more amenable to authority. Trust-

worthy settlers could also be settled on canals as a counterpoise to such nomads as preferred to remain footloose. In 1852 Reynell Taylor, Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ismael Khan, lauded a canal project which had brought 20,000 *bigahs* (10,000 acres) of *jangal* under cultivation and was being extended to water, 15,000 additional *bigahs*. Ample land was allotted to local people, but:

... the effect of all is in a great measure to provide employment and subsistence for a number of deserving men, some of whom have fought for us in the field, and further, to colonize a tract of country hitherto only inhabited by unruly half-reclaimed Afghan classes, who have been but a few years subject to any Government at all, with a strong body of loyal and civilized men, belonging to provinces long under strict subjection and therefore likely to side with order and discipline against sedition, treachery, hill influence, etc.<sup>53</sup>

Numerous Pathan officers who had served under Edwardes in the recent war took up land; several "established good substantial villages on the lands allotted to them, and . . . collected men from the neighborhood and . . . summoned others from their own homes to carry on the farms . . ." <sup>54</sup>

Hugh James' plan of canal management failed to find favor with the Board of Administration, which in January 1850, placed Multan Division canals under the Canal Department and appointed Lieutenant Anderson, Madras Engineers, as Superintendent of Inundation Canals. The Superintendent was furnished with two Assistants, Captain Rose in charge of Chenab canals and Mr. O'Brien in charge of the Sutlej series. There was also a staff of Indian surveyors and other subordinates.<sup>55</sup> In 1851 Anderson engaged ten *chaprasis* (orderlies) at Rs. 5 monthly to man ten depth gauges, two apiece on the Khanwah, Wali Muhammad, Googoo Nullah, Diwanwah, and Sirdarwah. The gauges enabled the Superintendent to determine the depth and fall of water, which he needed to know in order to excavate branch channels; they also assisted the Commissioner in judging whether the season was sufficiently unfavorable to warrant remissions of revenue.<sup>56</sup> The organizational scheme resembled James' plan which had called for an overall superintendent with deputy superintendents on the Chenab and Sutlej, but James had intended to use a native superintendent and deputies, who would have been subordinate to the District Officer.<sup>57</sup>



The Superintendent was responsible for clearance and improvement of existing canals, restoration of canals out of use and construction of new works. Clearances were performed by *cher* labor as before, absenteeism being punished by fines adequate to hire workers to replace the missing men. Government paid for improvements beyond capabilities of forced labor and, contrary to James' advice, recovered costs by a water rate of eight annas per acre on land irrigated by overflow and four annas per acre on land irrigated by lift. As under the previous government, *panchayats* of *lambardars* assisted government officials to supervise the clearances. *Tahsildars* took over functions of *kardars*, setting quotas of *chers*, supervising clearances, and collecting fines. In theory, *tahsildars* and *panchayats* executed the will of the Superintendent of Canals, who determined the total number of *chers* required and made work assignments.<sup>58</sup>

The new system of canal management contained several serious flaws. Failure to provide the Superintendent with an organization to execute his orders constituted the principal defect. The Superintendent had to work through *tahsildars* who paid little attention to his directives, despite orders from above to obey Canal Officers. *Tahsildars* did not supervise work in person, but delegated responsibility to ill-paid temporary personnel who were frequently corrupt and inefficient. Government kept income from *naghah* fines instead of devoting it to hiring workers and effecting improvements. Wealthy men bought exemption by paying *naghah*, less prosperous individuals had to do more than a fair share, and the shortage of labor prevented canals from being properly cleared.<sup>59</sup>

The above-mentioned defects affected water supplies. As silt deposits built up, canals filled later in the season, held less water, and dried up sooner. Indigo production fell off because that crop required large amounts of water. By contrast, Sawan Mal had understood that indigo needed an early, abundant, and regular supply of water and considered "the effectual clearance and punctual opening of the canal . . . as much the duty of the *kardar* as the collection of the revenue."<sup>60</sup>

Chief Commissioner John Lawrence in January 1856 issued orders designed to remove some shortcomings of canal administration. The Superintendent of Canals was invested with direct authority over inundation canals and with full control over supervisory establishments; *naghah* revenues

were ordered to be devoted solely to canal improvement. In May 1856, the Punjab Government authorized expenditure of up to Rs. 822-8-0 monthly on a permanent canal establishment.<sup>61</sup> The new arrangements did not go to the heart of the trouble because, again, fines were not earmarked specifically for the hire of laborers. Canal Officers devoted funds to pet projects, the rich continued to benefit at expense of the less fortunate, and canals were uncleared at the start of the floods.<sup>62</sup>

At the time of the First Regular Settlement, Settlement Officer Morris advocated a return to Sawan Mal's principles of canal management. He made a strong case that the Diwan's methods had been more effective than British efforts. He attempted less convincingly to depict the old arrangement as popular and equitable. Morris contended that *corvée* labor had been popular with "the people." By "the people" he meant non-cultivating landholders who had sent tenants as *chers*. Such "people" had not furnished the sweat. According to Morris, *kardars* had consulted the *zamindars* about clearance operations. The Settlement Officer went on to state, however, that the authorities had compelled the "principal *lambardars*" to assist in superintending clearances, compensating the headmen by a reduction in their *cher* quotas.<sup>63</sup> In other words, canal management by "the people" had been forced participation by committees of large landholders, themselves closely watched by *kardars*.

Morris praised the fairness of Swan Mal's *cher* assessments. Influential men had been occasionally exempted from quotas and the rich sometimes had received special treatment, but "as a general rule the distribution of labor was very fair, it being left in a great measure to the people themselves, and checked by the system of direct revenue management then in vogue, which was very well adapted to show the amount of benefit each had derived from the past year's irrigation."<sup>64</sup> Since "the people" in question had been big *zamindars*, Morris' confidence seemed ill-founded. The Settlement Officer's assumption that officials would have intervened to correct abuses appeared overly optimistic. Permitting leading men to shift *cher* demand onto other shoulders would have been a convenient way of rewarding cooperation in canal upkeep. A suspicion arises that Morris desired a return to Sawan Mal's system because it got the job done, not because it fostered social justice. In fact, the



Nazim's arrangements had worked so well precisely because they had been tailored to the socio-economic pecking order in the countryside.

The concept of "the people" as being a rung or so farther up the socio-economic ladder than the amorphous "masses" formed part of the *zeitgeist* in nineteenth century English thought. Queen Victoria could refer to the archetypally middle-class Disraeli as "a man risen from the people."<sup>65</sup> Application of the term "the people" to prominent landholders recalls Mukherjee and Frykenberg's observations on the *ryotwari* settlement in Madras Presidency. The "cultivators" (*ryots*) with whom Sir Thomas Munro settled were high-caste members of village elites, not humble agricultural laborers. For Munro's generation, "cultivator" denoted a respectable landholder similar to an English gentleman farmer. Munro worked through village leaders in much the same way as Sawan Mal and the British worked through rural notables in Multan.<sup>66</sup>

Circumstances surrounding drying-up of the Khanwah Canal in Gugera District, north of Multan, revealed inadequacies of initial Company canal administration. In 1852 the Khanwah remained full throughout most of the summer and a bountiful *kharif* harvest seemed assured. Then in early September the canal suddenly ran dry, with the result that "crops which were before beautiful, gradually fell away, and wasted as if a blight had passed over them." Only crops close to wells could be partially saved. Fifty-five of the best villages were ruined at a loss of Rs. 55,507 in revenue. Thinking the failure permanent, the people became despondent. Crowds rushed to Lahore in order to petition the Board of Administration for relief and some panicky landholders threw up leases of villages in good condition.<sup>67</sup> The Punjab Government was compelled to institute a revised summary settlement, which scaled down the revenue demand from Rs. 371,233 to Rs. 286,154.<sup>68</sup> In reporting calamity to the Government of India, the Punjab Government disclaimed all responsibility. When the water supply first showed signs of failure in 1850, the Board of Administration had ordered prompt clearances. Unfortunately, unusual winter floods in January 1851, hampered work. No explanation was provided as to why nothing was accomplished during the cool season of 1851-52. Although conceding that neglect of silt clearances had contributed to disappearance of water, the Punjab Government attributed the

failure principally to an eastward shift by the Sutlej, which was beyond human power to foresee.<sup>69</sup> In fact the river had first changed course in 1850, allowing ample time for counter-measures.<sup>70</sup>

Nearly two years elapsed before the Khanwah was restored to working order, at a cost of almost Rs. 100,000. In late 1852, the Punjab Government requested Rs. 62,467-2-6 from the Government of India for repairs and improvements. The provincial authorities failed to explain why they had not acted before the canal dried up completely. All appropriations in excess of Rs. 50,000 had to be approved by the East India Company Court of Directors in London, whose sanction did not reach India until the hot weather of 1853. In late 1853 the Punjab Government obtained a further Rs. 36,165-5-6 from the Government of India in order to effect additional improvements, including a new mouth for the Khanwah, and to absorb cost overruns.<sup>71</sup> By April 1854, abundant water was again flowing through the canal.<sup>72</sup>

The years between Annexation and the Mutiny were very much a time of trial and error for the new masters of Multan. Officials were hampered by intellectual baggage picked up in the North-Western Provinces where environmental conditions were markedly different. Multan was subjected to fixed revenue settlements though fluctuating demands were better suited to local realities. Canals were taken from the control of revenue authorities and placed under a Canal Department, which behaved sluggishly. The time lag between the need for and accomplishment of repairs resulted in a lowering of agricultural production and general discontent among the cultivators, many of whom took off for greener pastures. As a consequence of both administrative experiments, the revenue yield fell considerably below past performances and current expectations.



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## CHAPTER NINE

### Multan and the Mutiny: 1857-1858

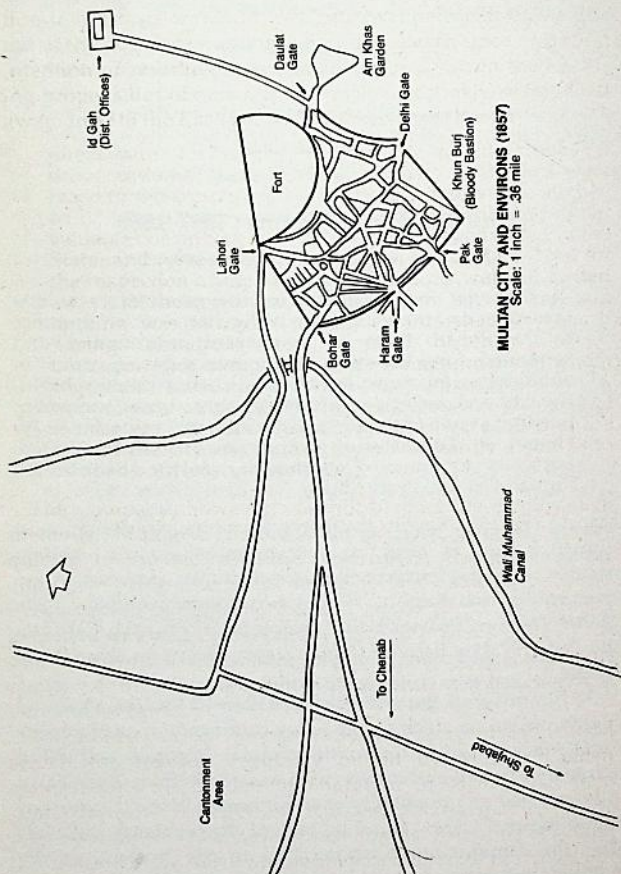
"Lying near the confluence of the great rivers of that province, commanding their navigation and the entrance to the Punjab from the southward, surrounded, and separated from the seat of government, by long tracts of wilderness, inhabited by turbulent and predatory tribes, the city and fortress of Multan occupy a most prominent position as one of the Keys of the Punjab." — Lt. Col G.W. Hamilton, Commissioner of Multan, to R.H. Davies, Secretary to Punjab Government, 16 July 1860, PSRO, Punjab General Proceedings, No. 70 of 28 July 1860.

During the 1857 Revolt, the survival of imperial dominion in Punjab hinged in large measure upon retention of Multan because the District controlled the northern terminus of the river route from Karachi.<sup>1</sup> When widespread rebellion in the North-Western Provinces cut communications with Calcutta, the Indus Valley became Punjab's sole lifeline to the outside world.

At the onset of the crisis the situation in Multan appeared highly precarious since a large sepoy contingent of questionable loyalty faced a tiny European detachment. Vigorous and skilful action by the civil authorities (with some help from the military side) averted any possibility of an outbreak. While the preventive measures taken cannot be faulted, the evidence indicates that the administration succumbed to the hysteria of the moment in hunting feverishly for mutiny plots after the fact.

The civil population remained quiet, due primarily to the example set by the Muslim upper classes who rallied to the side of Government. The most potentially dangerous element, the nomads of the District's interior were converted into a





source of strength by a judicious combination of carrot and stick on the part of the authorities. Multan not only proved immune to a nomadic rising in neighboring Gugera District but also contributed materially to its suppression.

## I

On the eve of the revolt, the garrison at Multan City consisted of: a company of European Artillery (approximately seventy men), a troop of Native Horse Artillery, the 1st Irregular Cavalry (the redoubtable Skinner's Horse),<sup>2</sup> and the 62nd and 69th Regiments of Bengal Native Infantry. In addition the civil power disposed of 100 Mounted Police and 250 men of the 3rd (Katar Mukhi or Dagger Faced) Police Battalion.<sup>3</sup>

The sepoy infantry suffered from the malaise that afflicted the Bengal Army. In regular units the spread of impersonal regulations and the downgrading of indigenous officers, a consequence of the proliferation of British officers, had dangerously eroded morale and confidence.<sup>4</sup> Skinner's Horse, an irregular formation, was in a far healthier state. "Irregular" corps had a maximum of six European officers (Skinner's had only three), who were picked for aptitude in managing Indian troops, as against twenty-four in "regular" regiments. Owing to the paucity of Europeans, Indian officers in the "irregulars," unlike their "regular" counterparts, wielded substantial responsibility. This circumstance constituted a bulwark against mutiny because the Indian officers were more likely both to feel they had a stake in the existing order and to be able to control their men.<sup>5</sup> European regular officers were wont to gibe "at the officers of the irregular regiments, with their long beards, their Ruritanian uniforms and their lax discipline. Close contact with their men and Indian officers, who came of a better class with a more independent position than the ordinary type of sepoy, was another . . . source of mirth in military circles."<sup>6</sup> This much-derided informality and closeness between Englishmen and Indians constituted additional insurance against revolt. The Punjab Military Police was organized along "irregular" lines. Its only British officers were four captains, one for each Police Division of the Province, who exercised broad authority over their men, including magisterial powers. Battalions were commanded by Indians.<sup>7</sup>



## II

According to Commissioner G.W. Hamilton's "Multan Division Mutiny Report" (February 1858), symptoms of unrest appeared among the Native Infantry in early May 1857. Meetings were held to discuss the greased cartridge issue, rumors circulated in the Multan bazaars that introduction of such cartridges would trigger an explosion, and fruitless efforts were made to persuade the 1st Irregular Cavalry to join in opposing the controversial ammunition.<sup>8</sup> A sepoy burst into the Assistant Commissioner's Court demanding the news. On being told the post had not come, he departed with a knowing smile. Two hours later the mail arrived bearing tidings of the disarmament of the mutinous 34th Native Infantry at Calcutta. Soldiers "daily surrounded the post office asking unusual and inquisitive questions to the bodily fear and alarm of the whole establishment." Sepoys ceased making remittances to their families through the Government treasury, apparently considering Indian bankers to be safer. As if preparing for a hasty departure, so many soldiers converted their bulky silver rupees into gold *mohurs* that the demand drove up the value of the latter coins (normally worth Rs. 16 apiece).<sup>5</sup>

After the outbreak of rebellion elsewhere, the Punjab Government concluded that the suspicious occurrences at Multan had been "part and parcel of a universal and determined design to subvert our rule."<sup>10</sup> In reality these incidents appear to have been invested *ex post facto* with an unduly sinister connotation. At most they indicated the sepoys were uneasy over the greased cartridges and doubtful about the stability of the existing regime. It is worth noting that Deputy Commissioner F.E. Voyle of Multan observed no portents of revolt:

In this district profound tranquillity prevailed and not a suspicion was entertained of any probable disturbance up to the middle of May—indeed, with regard to the mutiny at Barrackpore, and disquiet at other remote stations, they were looked upon in these parts as local affairs, and, from the great distance that intervened, not likely to affect the soldiery at Mooltan.<sup>11</sup>

## III

The European community of Multan City was attending a band concert on the evening of 13 May 1857, when a courier from Lahore brought word of the mutinies at Meerut and Delhi (10 and 11 May). Commissioner Hamilton, Lieutenant-Colonel Hicks, the cantonment commander, and Major Crawford Chamberlain, commanding officer of Skinner's Horse, immediately went into conference. A scenario like those at many other stations in 1857 now unfolded. Hicks, an old regular Native Army officer, was certain of the fidelity of his sepoys and distrustful of the Military Police. These sentiments were shared by all his officers save Major Chamberlain. The Commissioner and Chamberlain believed the Native Infantry to be disaffected, but the 1st Irregulars, Military Police, and probably the Native Horse Artillery to be staunch. With so few European troops on hand, an immediate attempt to disarm the suspect regiments was deemed too hazardous. Hamilton and Chamberlain proposed calling in loyal Punjabi forces from the Derajat Frontier to enforce a disarmament but, since Colonel Hicks objected, settled for placing the border outposts on alert. Soon afterwards, the Punjab Government directed the Derajat units to concentrate at Multan, presumably at the Commissioner's request.<sup>12</sup> Hicks may have felt, as did other Bengal Army commanders in similar situations, that an effort to disarm would stampeded basically loyal men into mutiny by arousing fears they would be massacred once rendered defenseless.<sup>13</sup>

While not convinced there was any cause for alarm, Hicks grudgingly authorized Major Chamberlain to take precautions against an outbreak. Chamberlain's presence at Multan was a major asset to the administration. The Major had led irregular horse in Afghanistan, Sind, and the Punjab and had commanded Skinner's since 1849. His great personal influence over his regiment was instrumental in keeping it loyal under trying circumstances.<sup>14</sup> On one occasion Chamberlain used a dramatic gesture to restore confidence. One squadron of the 1st Irregulars was composed of Ranghars, Muslim Rajputs from the Delhi region. Ranghars had been in the forefront of the Meerut mutiny and were widely regarded with suspicion. The troopers of the Ranghar squadron gained the impression that Chamberlain did not trust them as much as the other



squadrons. When their commander came to the Major to complain, Chamberlain sent an orderly to fetch a prized jewelled sword which had been given him by a close friend. Handing this blade to the squadron commander, Chamberlain told him to return it when the war was over. This display of trust insured the loyalty of the Ranghar sowars.<sup>15</sup>

On 14th May, Major Chamberlain assembled Indian officers from every unit at his bungalow and expounded on the heinousness of proving untrue to one's salt (*nimak haram*). These officers, particularly the *Subadar-Major* of the 69th Regiment, professed ignorance of any disquiet over greased cartridges. Thereupon, the *Wurdi-Major* (Adjutant) of Skinner's Horse, Barkat Ali, proposed that everybody put their seals on a pledge to be responsible for the good behavior of their units. If their hearts were clean, they would have nothing to fear. Most begged off on the plea that they could not control the rank-and-file. As a result of this pressure tactic, one officer did admit hearing a rumor of the arrival of two crates of greased cartridges from Bombay.<sup>16</sup>

That very afternoon Chamberlain paraded the 69th and opened for the men's inspection the two boxes of Bombay ammunition (which had aroused suspicion from being packaged differently than Bengal Army issue). Although Chamberlain offered to destroy the cartridges at once, the soldiers claimed to be satisfied they were not defiling. Chamberlain then dismissed the regiment with an exhortation to "dispossess their minds of these groundless suspicions, instigated by evil and designing men, and to recall to mind instead the glorious tales their fathers had told them of the Company's raj."<sup>17</sup>

While Chamberlain labored to head off an outbreak, Commissioner Hamilton and Deputy Commissioner Voyle prepared for the worst. Although Multan Fort had been largely dismantled after the 1848-49 campaign, the inner citadel was relatively intact. In a few days' time it was repaired, mounted with cannon, provisioned for six months, and garrisoned by the Katar Mukhi Battalion.<sup>18</sup> The specie in the District Treasury (located at the *Zillah Kutchery* in the Idgah Mosque) was transferred to the Fort for safekeeping. Mounted Police details totaling 120 men were pulled back to Multan City from the countryside. Katar Mukhi detachments at such places as the District Jail were concentrated at the Fort, extra police being hired to take their places. Mounted Police were assigned to

guard bridges over the Wali Muhammad Canal separating the cantonment from the city. The apprehension of deserters was ordered and a Rs. 50 reward offered for each one turned in.<sup>19</sup>

The District was sealed off from the outside world in order to insulate the sepoy garrison and general populace from knowledge of the magnitude of the upheaval in the North-Western Provinces. This was a prudent move. Even in the absence of a general conspiracy, word of the reverses suffered by Government might well have convinced the sepoys at Multan that the Company's Raj was at an end and they should salvage whatever they could from the wreckage. Geography favored the authorities' designs. Multan was bounded by the unfordable Chenab River on the west and the Sutlej (fordable only in unusually dry winters) on the south-east, while the Ravi (fordable only in winter) flowed across its northern corner. Most of the ferries on all three streams (there were no bridges) were shut down; the remainder were strongly guarded by 300 men of a new levy which had been hastily raised and trained by the Deputy Commissioner.<sup>20</sup> Censorship was imposed on an Urdu newspaper at Multan City. Wandering *faqirs* (believed to be carriers of treasonous messages), strangers, and suspicious characters were taken into custody. Sepoys' mail was intercepted, a measure which Voyle asserted "had a good effect in distracting their councils and preventing any outward display of mutiny, as they were thus kept in ignorance of the treason of their fellows." Civilian correspondence was also opened, but only one or two questionable letters were found. One, from a *maulvi* of Sonapat to a *munshi* of Multan, led to the execution of its writer.<sup>21</sup> As a result of the information blackout, the full extent of the rebellion was not known in Multan for several days.<sup>22</sup>

#### IV

At the beginning of June the Bengal Infantry grew unruly, having finally learned of the successes of the insurgents in the North-Western Provinces. Sepoys commenced assuming airs of independence and neglecting to salute. According to a spy's report, seditious meetings were held at Hindu temples where sepoys discussed seizing the Fort and sacking the city. While this unsubstantiated testimony was not sufficient to charge



anyone with treason, an ex-sepoy turned *faqir* whom the troops regarded as a leader was detained in an effort to disrupt the supposed plotting.<sup>23</sup>

Disaffected elements of the 69th Native Infantry reportedly attempted to touch off a mutiny of the night of 7-8 June 1857. At approximately 8:30 P.M. on the 7th, *Wurdi-Major* Barkat Ali and the Indian doctor of the 1st Irregular Cavalry rushed to Major Chamberlain with word that a Horse Artillery trooper had heard from a sepoy of the 69th that the 9:00 P.M. gun was to be the signal for a general massacre of whites. They implored their commander to flee at once with his family. Nonetheless, Chamberlain stayed put since he lacked time to send away the other womenfolk of the station and had confidence in his own regiment. The rumored mutiny never materialized. According to another account, part of one wing (battalion) of the 69th tried to seize their muskets for a revolt at 2:00 A.M. on the 8th but were dissuaded by the more loyal (or more cautious) majority. These adumbrations of mutiny stirred panic in Multan City. Most residents buried their wealth; many left town or sent away their families.<sup>24</sup>

Early in June the 1st Punjab Cavalry and a wing of the 2nd Punjab Infantry (Green's Rifles) reached Multan, where they were placed by Government under control of the Commissioner. There was no love lost between native Punjabis and the men of the Bengal Army (predominantly Brahmins and Rajputs from the Middle Gangetic Plain).<sup>25</sup> As an added precaution against contamination by the sepoy garrison, however, the new arrivals were billeted in the Am Khas Garden three and one-half miles from the cantonment.<sup>26</sup>

The Multan authorities hoped to defer a disarmament until a wing of the 1st Bombay European Fusiliers arrived from Sind. A successful mutiny at Jullundur on the night of 7th June, however, forced the hand of Chief Commissioner John Lawrence.<sup>27</sup> Concerned lest the Multan garrison rise upon learning of their compatriots' success, the Chief Commissioner ordered a disarmament while the Fusiliers' vanguard was still 500 miles distant at Sukkur. By-passing the senior military officer on the scene, Colonel Hicks, Lawrence put Major Chamberlain in complete charge of the operations. On receiving the Chief Commissioner's directive on the evening of 9th June, Hamilton and Chamberlain made the necessary arrangements without notifying the cantonment authorities.<sup>28</sup>

Early on the morning of 10 June 1857 Hicks was notified of the orders of Government and told to parade his command. The Punjabi regiments marched from the Am Khas to cantonments and took up position in accordance with a prearranged plan.<sup>29</sup> When the 62nd and 69th were formed on a close-order brigade front, they could see to their left front the 1st Irregular Cavalry. On that unit's left and directly opposite the sepoys was the 1st Punjab Cavalry. A wing of the 2nd Punjab Infantry was visible to the left rear of the Punjabi troopers.<sup>30</sup>

Major Chamberlain, raised to Brigadier for the occasion, commanded the sepoys to lay down their arms. He promised that no harm would come to them if they complied. Should they resist, he would use force! As the Brigadier finished speaking, "on cue" the 1st Punjab Cavalry executed a left flanking movement, unmasking the Native Horse Artillery battery. The Native Infantry found themselves literally looking down the muzzles of six cannon—loaded with grape and with portfires lit! A further look revealed each piece to be guarded by eight European gunners with carbines, insurance against the Indian crews developing any qualms about firing on brothers in arms.

Caught completely by surprise, the sepoys saw disobedience would be suicidal and meekly stacked arms. The 62nd Regiment displayed a nervous alacrity, some men exclaiming that Government had a perfect right to take back its weapons. The 69th reportedly evinced some hesitancy. (Afterwards it was discovered that the Indian artillerymen, regarding the 69th as the main threat, had trained all their pieces on it.) By 11:00 A.M. the disarmament was complete. This stroke immediately restored confidence among the inhabitants of Multan City: leading citizens flocked to congratulate the Commissioner and refugees returned. The Indus Valley lifeline of Punjab was secure!<sup>31</sup>

In light of the risks involved, the Multan disarmament was a notable feat. Only one company of British soldiers was present and the nearest British garrison was at Lahore 200 miles away. Skinner's Horse, itself composed of Hindustanis, had to be used to overawe Hindustani infantry. The operation succeeded because of careful planning by Chamberlain and Hamilton, and no doubt because of the loyalty of many sepoys—men who remained true to their code of *nimak hallal*.



Following the disarmament, more allegations of mutinous machinations came to light. A captured deserter from the 69th under imminent sentence of death won a reprieve by implicating others. His execution parade was held on schedule to permit the arrest of the accused. To their amazement, the paraded sepoy beheld several men of the 69th, including *Subadar-Major* Nahur Khan, seized out of the ranks. While most were later released for lack of evidence, investigation into their cases developed information which led to the conviction of some individuals as ringleaders.<sup>32</sup>

Since the suspects might just as well have been apprehended in barracks, undoubtedly they were grabbed on parade to produce the maximum psychological effect. A like attention to public edification characterized those grisly occasions when mutineers were blown from cannon: the troops of a station were paraded; the public was invited; and the executions were consummated with great pomp and ceremony.

Even though reinforcements from Sind began arriving at Multan on 19 June, they pressed on at once towards the main theatre of war before the gates of Delhi. A possibility still existed that the disarmed regiments might overpower the scanty garrison. The authorities heard of secret sepoy assemblies at a *Shewallah* (Shiva temple) but could obtain no particulars. Indian officers of the 69th Native Infantry prevailed on their commander to forbid anyone from entering or leaving the regimental lines, purportedly to shield the men from seditious influences. According to Commissioner Hamilton, this interdict was actually designed to conceal the hatching of plots.<sup>33</sup>

A break in the curtain of secrecy came in early July when a discharged sepoy of the 69th appeared before Voyle and Hamilton to request a passport for Hindustan. Despite a long and distinguished service record,<sup>34</sup> this individual had been dismissed for leaving the lines after evening roll call.irate at such treatment, the soldier accused the Indian officers of getting rid of loyalists such as himself by pointing them out to the Colonel as bad characters (*badmashes*). Upon being promised reinstatement and promotion for informing, the man declared that the sudden disarmament had nipped a mutiny in the bud but that one might yet be attempted. Furthermore, the sepoy implicated *Subadar-Major* Nahur Khan and ten enlisted men of

the 69th in a mutiny conspiracy.<sup>35</sup> In an effort to obtain corroboration of these charges, *sowars* of Skinner's Horse in the guise of *faqirs* infiltrated the infantry lines. These however "had to deny themselves repeatedly, and on more than one occasion found their legs more useful than argument."<sup>36</sup> Finally, at the behest of Major Chamberlain, *Wurdi-Major* Barkat Ali induced an Indian officer of an infantry regiment to furnish intelligence.<sup>37</sup>

By mid-July the authorities believed they had sufficient evidence to justify convening a General Court Martial. This body consisted of five European officers with Chamberlain as Government Prosecutor. The Court concluded that an uprising had been planned for the night of 7th June but the conspirators had lost their nerve.<sup>38</sup> On 20 June 1857 *Subadar-Major* Nahur Khan was found guilty of instigating mutiny on three occasions:

- (1) In April-May 1857 he had been aware of discontent over greased cartridges which he had failed to report to his commanding officer.
- (2) At evening roll call on 7th June he had incited resistance to disarmament by a cryptic remark that the men should obey Government, but if they kept "their hands and feet strong" they could get service anywhere.
- (3) On 11th June he had created despondency and alarm by falsely stating the 69th was to be destroyed next morning.

The *Subadar-Major* was blown from a cannon on 24th July.<sup>39</sup>

A *naik* (corporal) and nine privates of Number 1 Company of the 69th were convicted on 29th July of having conspired to seize their weapons on 7th June. The night before their execution the doomed men (who were permitted to feast and revel) reputedly talked freely of their intention to mutiny and abused one another for failing to go through with it. When a young sepoy about twenty years of age gave way to tears, *Naik* Lutchman Tewary exclaimed: "Were it not for these handcuffs and fetters you should die now by having your thorax torn out." On the morning of 30th July the ten went to their deaths, "cleanly dressed and with a jaunty air."<sup>40</sup>

It is difficult to assess the validity of the official claims of attempted mutiny. In perilous times treason is often discerned where none exists. Furthermore, the "Multan Mutiny Report" itself engenders a suspicion that the authorities might have mistaken a common house cat for the ferocious Bengali feline.



Instead of presenting a chronology, the report interprets, illuminates, and construes events; instead of history it is historicism.

In his "Report," Commissioner Hamilton develops the disarmament saga as high drama. The first act opens with a Multan beset from within by disloyal sepoys and from without by predatory nomads. Tempo and tension build until the climax: a successful disarmament. In the best "theatre" characters are introduced and depicted as heroes or villains.

In the next act the "Report" goes all out to convince the reader that a *Subadar-Major* and ten enlisted men deserved death for plotting a mutiny which, "although it did not come off, . . . was not the less intended."<sup>41</sup> Nahur Khan was convicted on the hearsay evidence of two statements. In neither case were the hearers quite sure of what was said and one statement took the form of a parable. On the same day (7th June) that "this arch traitor and leader of the mutiny"<sup>42</sup> supposedly encouraged his regiment to resist disarmament, he advised his Adjutant that the men were disaffected.<sup>43</sup>

The ten rankers were found guilty on the testimony of a deserter under sentence of death, who won a reprieve thereby, and of a cashiered veteran, who was rewarded with reinstatement and promotion. This was supported by evidence in the best "aunt's sister's washwoman's son" tradition.<sup>44</sup> A prime example was

. . . positive information had reached them through a trooper of the Horse Artillery (who was told by one of the 69th sepoys). Extraordinary to relate, the authority could never be traced beyond the Horse Artillery trooper, who declared he did not know, nor could he recognize, the man who told him what was to happen.<sup>45</sup>

Oddly, the high point of the second act is not the Court Martial or executions but rather the convenient confession on execution eve when the "gang"—manacled, fettered, and in their cups—obligingly discusses their guilt before an unknown and undeclared listener.<sup>46</sup> This post-conviction revelation satisfies the niceties of Anglo-Saxon sensibilities in such matters. Also it shows that in the month or more between the arrest and trial, the authorities had not succeeded in extracting an admission of guilt from the prisoners, one of whom was a badly frightened twenty-year old.

No one reasonably could question the timeliness and

efficiency of the disarmament. Whether or not the fears and tensions of the moment were fact or fancy, they were no less real and menacing to the small band of European participants. It is only when the "Mutiny Report" appears unduly histrionic and strains so hard to flesh out fears with happenstance and invective that erstwhile heroes appear a little ludicrous and eleven lives, however expendable, a high price for glory.

Commissioner Hamilton's treatment of events presents the greatest enigma of this whole episode. We have previously met him defending Diwan Mulraj against a charge of murder and defending himself against Monckton's efforts at character assassination. In all his statements Hamilton had exhibited a restrained and temperate approach as well as a sense of the true nature of evidence that is hard to fault. Therefore, the Commissioner's extravagant language and use of evidence that would scarcely convince a "Kangaroo Court" seem totally out of character. The following specimen of purple prose is particularly noteworthy: "The destruction of the mutineers did not put an end to the evil designs of those who hoped and wished for a reign of horror."<sup>47</sup>

In all probability, policy considerations lay behind Hamilton's theatrics. By February 1858, when the "Multan Mutiny Report" was submitted, the Indian administration felt a need to justify its proceedings during the 1857 Revolt to the British public. The earlier clamor at home for indiscriminate vengeance had subsided and searching questions were being asked in Parliament and the press about the conduct of some of the men in the field.<sup>48</sup> In addition, by exaggerating the magnitude of the danger the Commissioner may have been trying to establish a claim to reward. He evidently expected some distinction, for two years later he complained plaintively of having been overlooked in the post-Mutiny distribution of knight-hoods.<sup>49</sup>

## VI

Thus far we have followed the measures taken by the authorities to forestall a military mutiny. It is now necessary to turn our attention to the policies adopted to maintain tranquillity among the civil population.

At the beginning of the emergency, Commissioner Hamilton judged that he:



... could place much confidence in most of the higher classes at Mooltan and Jhung who during the last Punjab War had given much aid to the British Government ... if they remained true in their allegiance ... their influence and authority would be successfully exerted in maintaining order among the lower classes of the towns and well-peopled tracts."<sup>50</sup>

Hamilton therefore concentrated his efforts on retaining the allegiance of the Muslim upper classes.<sup>51</sup>

In a conspicuous display of confidence building, the Commissioner held *durbars* every morning. These assemblages, which were well attended by gentry, merchants, and agriculturists, afforded him an opportunity to project assurance of ultimate victory and report on favorable developments at the battle front.<sup>52</sup> Convinced they were on the winning side, the leading Muslim families stayed "true in their allegiance."

In the Commissioner's opinion, the *pirs* of Multan (who remained loyal with one unnamed exception) were Government's most valuable allies due to their pervasive influence over the Muslim population. By contrast, though second to none in zeal "the few remains of the old Pathan nobility ... had little influence in the country."<sup>53</sup> At first glance, it is somewhat startling to find the Pathans dismissed so lightly only eight years after playing a major role in the Multan Campaign. The appellation "Multani Pathans," however, was somewhat misleading since it denoted Afghan colonists in the old Multan Province, which had encompassed South-West Punjab and the Derajat. These Afghans were most numerous in the Derajat, whence came the bulk of Edwardes' levies in 1848-49. In Multan District itself Pathans were weak both in numbers and influence.<sup>54</sup>

In 1857 *Mukhdum* Shah Mahmud Qureshi and Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani once again rendered distinguished services. In the Commissioner's judgment, the example of Shah Mahmud's steady loyalty was instrumental in keeping the Muslim populace obedient. None of the *Mukhdum's* disciples joined any insurrection. His record stood in refreshing contrast to that of the chief *pir* of Gugera District, the Diwan of Pakpattan, whose *murids* were conspicuous in an uprising by nomadic tribes.<sup>55</sup> Shah Mahmud informed the Commissioner promptly of any significant information that came to his attention. He also furnished recruits for the army and police.<sup>56</sup>

Although deficient in local influence, Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani was a proven soldier. He was commissioned to raise a troop (*rissala*) of irregular horse, whose services will be noticed below.<sup>57</sup>

The pastoral tribes of north-eastern Multan District, who had a long history of rebellion in times of governmental weakness, represented the main threat to civil peace. Nonetheless, Hamilton knew most of the nomad chieftains and hoped that his influence could keep them in order. He summoned the principal headmen to Multan City and, while not placing them under restraint, kept them in constant attendance on him. The chiefs saw the strength of the administration at first hand and inferred correctly that they were hostages for the good behavior of their clans. In a hasty display of loyalty the nomad leaders provided men and mounts for newly raised irregular cavalry. A decisive test of their intentions did not come until the Gugeru uprising of mid-September 1857.<sup>58</sup>

## VII

Multan's primary contribution to the war effort was to serve as a conduit for vitally needed reinforcements. Having debarked from river steamers at Multan City, units either: (1) marched to Lahore to replace forces that had gone down the Grand Trunk Road to Delhi; or (2) proceeded to Delhi via Ferozepur on the east bank of the Sutlej. In June through August the following formations passed through Multan: 1st Punjab Cavalry, left wing of the 1st Bombay Europeans,<sup>59</sup> 2nd Punjab Infantry, and right and left wings of the 1st Baluch Battalion. Rs. 250,000 in specie were forwarded to Ferozepur and an additional 500,000 to Lahore (in both cases under strong escort). Large consignments of arms, ammunition, and quartermaster stores were shipped from Sind to Multan, whence they were transported to Lahore and Ferozepur by a camel train organized at the behest of John Lawrence.<sup>60</sup>

Multan did not make a large manpower contribution to the Government's cause. Unlike the Jats of central Punjab or the Pathans and Baluchis of the Frontier, Multanis did not take readily to military service.<sup>61</sup> The only Multani unit to see much action beyond the District boundaries was Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani's *rissala* of 110 men (20 of whom were



provided by *Mukhdum* Shah Mahmud).<sup>62</sup> Ghulam Mustafa and his band served with distinction in Hariana with a field force commanded by General Van Cortlandt, late of the *Khalsa* army.<sup>63</sup>

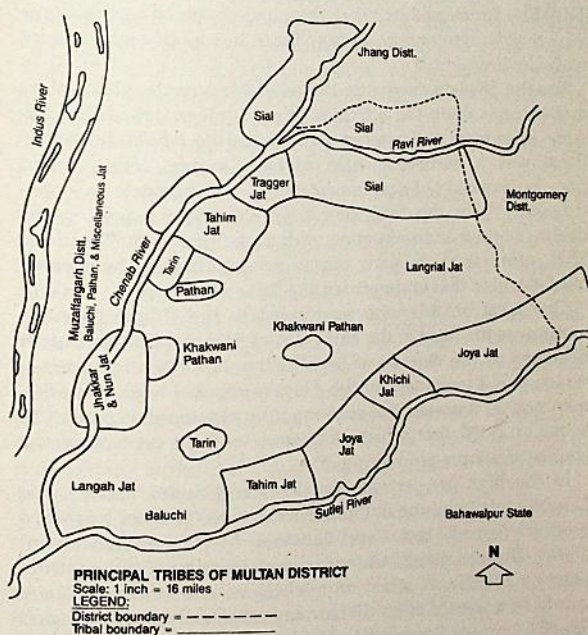
## VIII

The importance of secure control of Multan became manifest when a major insurrection erupted in neighboring Gugera District (mid-September 1857). Thanks to strong support from local notables, the District administration was able not only to prevent the spread of the uprising to Multan but also to send substantial reinforcements to the beleaguered Gugera authorities.

The Gugera rising (the only major civil disturbance in Punjab in 1857) involved a number of pastoral tribes in the Ravi and Sutlej Valleys. The Upper Ravi Kharrals were the most powerful of these and their chief, Ahmad Khan, was the kingpin of the revolt. The immediate cause of the insurrection was a conviction by the nomads that the Company's Raj was on its last legs, freeing them to revert to their time-honored predatory pursuits.<sup>64</sup> This impression was fostered by the withdrawal of practically all the troops and police stationed in the District and inflated reports of the triumphs of "His Majesty of Delhi."<sup>65</sup>

An error of judgment by the Deputy Commissioner, Lieutenant Elphinstone, facilitated the revolt. On orders from Commissioner Hamilton, Elphinstone had detained the chiefs of the principal tribes at District Headquarters. By protestations of loyalty and constant attendance upon the Deputy Commissioner, these headmen lulled his suspicions. Instead of mounting guard over them, Elphinstone was content to take heavy recognizances not to leave the *sadr* (headquarters) without permission. On the night of 16th September, the tribal leaders decamped in a body and proceeded to raise the countryside in rebellion.<sup>66</sup>

The insurrection quickly spread over a tract 50 miles broad by 80 miles long. The vital Lahore-Multan road was cut for 15 days. The network of police posts designed to restrain the *bar* nomads (see Chapter Eight) proved to be worse than useless. Not only did most of the *chaukis* fall without a struggle, but the insurgents augmented their meager stock of





firearms with weapons surrendered by the constables in the outposts.<sup>67</sup>

In Multan District pastoral clans held both banks of the Ravi from the Gugera boundary to the confluence with the Chenab.<sup>68</sup> There was therefore a danger of the Gugera insurrection spreading down the Ravi Valley into Multan. Commissioner Hamilton took the risky step of calling upon the nomad chiefs of northern Multan to repel incursions from Gugera.<sup>69</sup> Evidently impressed by what they had observed as the Commissioner's involuntary guests, these headmen cast their lot with Government.<sup>70</sup>

For the 1848-49 campaign the available sources yield information only about the activities of a few magnates of District-wide prominence. Scattered throughout the *tahsils*, however, there was a numerous class of local leaders (often called *chaudhris*) whose political importance in the aggregate was considerable.<sup>71</sup> For the 1857 Revolt we have data regarding the dealings of the administration with such "grassroots" leaders. This information deepens our understanding of the web of local alliances that undergirded the British Raj.

One local notable who responded to the Commissioner's tocsin was the head of the Hiraj clan of Rajputs, Sultan. Sultan hastened to the defense of Serai Sidhu *Tahsil* headquarters—which was threatened by the Gugera rebels—with 13 horsemen and 20 footmen. He subsequently mustered a force of 30 horse and 120 foot which did good work in protecting the countryside from plundering.<sup>72</sup>

In the high *bar* between the Ravi and Sutlej Valleys, the Langrial Jats were the dominant tribe. Their leaders were two brothers named Machia and Bahawal. At the commencement of the Gugera rising, Commissioner Hamilton sent instructions to Machia to arrest any rebels he encountered. There would be a reward of Rs. 100 for any rebel leader turned in and Rs. 20 for any ordinary rebel. Machia was exhorted to "show as much loyalty and interest on the behalf of the Government as you can so as it may procure you esteem and favour."<sup>73</sup> Machia and Bahawal raised a force of 500 men which successfully guarded the eastern border of the District.<sup>74</sup>

The only spill-over of the Gugera disturbances into Multan occurred in the extreme northeast along the Sutlej. There the Joya Jats took up arms in emulation of their fellow tribesmen in Gugera. To deal with this threat, Deputy Commissioner Voyle

was despatched from Multan *sadr* with 100 Mounted Police and the Langrials were directed to cooperate with him. Voyle's column, augmented by local levies, pushed northward by forced marches, "making from 25 to 35 miles per diem over country where the water from the late inundations covered the surface for miles, and during a period when the heat was so intense that even the natives seemed to sink under the all-powerful rays of a September's sun."<sup>75</sup> Near the village of Sahooke Machia and Bahawal joined with their men, bringing word that the Joyas were massing for a night attack. Just before dawn the enemy attacked but, thanks to the Langrials' warning, were beaten off. In reprisal, the entire male population of Sahooke, including the beater of their war drum, was put to the sword and the houses and grain stores burned. Captured livestock was made over to the Langrials.<sup>76</sup>

Of the troops at Multan, only two squadrons of Skinner's Horse were available for immediate deployment to Gugera. A recent incident had created doubts about the fidelity of this hitherto-steadfast regiment. While on leave, a highly respected *rissaldar*, Bisharat Ali, had been shot under questionable circumstances in his native village near Delhi. This had been done under orders of Lieutenant W.S.R. Hodson (who subsequently shot three Mughal princes after their surrender). The Indian officers and men of Skinner's believed firmly that the killing had been unjustified. To make matters worse, the deceased had been a brother-in-law of the indispensable *Wurdi-Major* Barkat Ali.<sup>77</sup> There being no choice in the matter, a detachment of the regiment was sent to Gugera.

Major Chamberlain and Barkat Ali led some 130 sabres into hostile territory. While unseen drums beat constantly in the thick grass jungle, the column advanced along a deserted road past burned-out mail wagon stations. On 23rd September the party was assailed by an estimated 2000 insurgents at the village of Chichawatni in southern Gugera. Taking refuge in a walled *serai* (travellers' rest house), the detachment withstood a three-day siege till relieved by a powerful field force from Lahore. Barkat Ali and his *sowars* behaved exemplarily throughout.<sup>78</sup>

After the link-up of the Multan and Lahore columns, resistance evaporated rapidly. Disheartened by proof that the Raj was still a going concern, the tribes scattered to their jungle coverts.<sup>79</sup> They hoped to wait out the enemy as they had on



many prior occasions but were rudely disappointed. Government troops flushed the insurgents from one hideout after another till they submitted. The uprising was effectively over by early November.<sup>80</sup>

In the latter stages of the operations, Commissioner Hamilton took the field in person accompanied by a train of Multan District notables and their retainers. "Their attendance served to augment the force in the field, but the moral effect of their presence was far more valuable in convincing the insurgents that they could not hope for the support of the higher classes of the country."<sup>81</sup> Conspicuous among these gentleman-volunteers was *Mukhdum* Shah Mahmud with 25 horsemen. According to the Commissioner, the *Mukhdum's* presence "had a great effect with the rebels who saw that the most influential man of their own faith was on the side of order."<sup>82</sup> Two prominent Pathans, Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani and Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai, were on hand. The former's *rissala* did good service in clearing the *bar* jungles; the latter, though only able to muster two horsemen, constructed rafts for an amphibious assault on the rebels' last redoubt in the Ravi wilderness.<sup>83</sup>

## IX

It remains only to relate the epilogue to the story of the Native Infantry garrison at Multan. In August 1858 the Punjab Government ordered all 15,000 disarmed sepoy in the Province to be disbanded piecemeal in parties of 20 per day from each military post (to prevent large concentrations of malcontents). The process was carried out peacefully everywhere save Multan.<sup>84</sup>

The men of the 62nd and 69th Regiments had been under intense strain since their disarmament more than a year previously. They had been held captive in their lines the whole time and had been forced to witness the ceremonious executions of eleven comrades, who had been convicted of mutiny on flimsy evidence. According to the Commissioner, the sepoys, though much dispirited, showed no disposition to rebel till subjected to an unnecessary and injudicious search for concealed arms. None were found but the troops became highly agitated. Coming on top of this, the order for piecemeal mustering-out appeared to the sepoys as a stratagem to split them into small

groups preparatory to extermination or transportation to the Andaman Islands. In late August rumors of an impending breakout prompted Hamilton to take steps to protect Multan City and the civil lines. The cantonment authorities ignored his warnings of trouble. Little was done either to dispel the soldiers' fears or to guard against an outbreak.<sup>85</sup>

On 31st August the bulk of both regiments mutinied while on parade and rushed the European Artillery and 1st Bombay Europeans.<sup>86</sup> Although armed mostly with clubs, *charpoy* legs, and stones, the sepoys fought desperately. Approximately 250 out of 1300 "mutineers" were mown down by grapeshot and musketry. On the other side, the Adjutant of the Bombay Europeans and four British gunners were killed.<sup>87</sup>

The surviving sepoys scattered in several directions. Most who headed for the city or civil lines were stopped by the defenses. *Mukhdum* Shah Mahmud and his retainers helped the Commissioner to hold a key bridge over the Wali Muhammad Canal.<sup>88</sup> Four hundred "mutineers" fled south along the Chenab, chased by the *Tahsildar* of Shujabad and local notables and peasants.<sup>89</sup> The escapees split into two bands, the smaller being herded onto a marshy island where all were killed, captured, or drowned. The larger was cornered close to the confluence of the Chenab and Sutlej by troops under Lieutenant J.T. Norgate and annihilated after a fierce struggle.<sup>90</sup>

After following the Chenab north for some distance, another group of 150 struck out across the *bar* towards the Sutlej trailed by the *Tahsildar* of Serai Sidhu with police and contingents from the principal clans of northern Multan. In addition, Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani, accompanied by a Mounted Police detail, was despatched from Multan City with orders to raise the peasantry. After being joined by a band of Langrials under Machia and Bahawal, Ghulam Mustafa overtook the "mutineers" at Karampur on the Diwanwah Canal on 5th September. (This was familiar ground to the Pathan, who had been *kardar* of the area under Sawan Mal.) The sepoys put up a fierce resistance, beating off their assailants with the loss of several dead and wounded. Bahawal the Langrial was mortally wounded in this clash. Later that day the Serai Sidhu levies came up and the attack was renewed. The "mutineers" were completely wiped out, no quarter being given. Sultan, the Hiraj chief, distinguished himself in this engagement.<sup>91</sup>

The remaining fugitives were rounded up within a few days.



Of 1323 "mutineers," 580 were reported killed and 719 taken prisoner. After summary trials, the latter were executed, transported, or imprisoned.<sup>92</sup> Thus ended the last act of the sepooy drama at Multan.

In the view of the Reverend Cave-Browne, a Punjab chaplain, the Multan "mutiny" proved the sepoys to have been traitors from the first. They rebelled because "their consciences feared a far more severe and juster fate" than disbandment.<sup>93</sup> In reality, the outbreak was a desperate attempt at escape by terrified men who believed themselves to be marked for elimination. It was significant that the 62nd Native Infantry, which had not been implicated in the alleged mutiny plot of June 1857, joined in the doomed outburst of August 1858.<sup>94</sup> The administration took satisfaction from "the active loyalty of the local tribes and their chiefs."<sup>95</sup> Manifestly, however, Multanis had much to gain and nothing to lose by joining in a hunt for hapless fugitives.

During the 1857 Revolt strategic Multan District remained firmly in Government hands. This was due largely to the vigor and prescience of the local authorities, notably Commissioner Hamilton and Major Chamberlain. At the beginning of the emergency, prompt measures were taken to forestall a mutiny by the large Bengal Army garrison. Subsequently, the sepoys were disarmed by a carefully planned and flawlessly executed operation. Regrettably, this record was marred by an overzealous search for mutiny plotters which led to a number of executions on questionable evidence.

In dealing with the general population, the administration presented an image of strength and resolve. The *pir* and Pathan families, who had done well by supporting the Raj in 1848, were disposed to do so again, barring adumbrations of an imminent collapse. Once assured of the stability of the regime, these magnates—with an eye to future rewards—went all out in its support. Muslim townsfolk and agriculturists followed the lead of their "bellwethers." In any event the sedentary classes, Hindus as well as Muslims, had a stake in the

preservation of order. A breakdown of authority would expose them to pillage by mutinous sepoys and marauding herdsmen from the *bar*. The pastoral population presented a trickier proposition.

By an astute mixture of stick (*i.e.* a display of the power and determination of Government) and carrot (*i.e.* the prospect of reward if they provided armed assistance) the nomadic headmen were persuaded that their interest lay in supporting the rulers. The chief reason for the "loyalty" of Multani pastoralists as opposed to the "disloyalty" of their counterparts in Gugera appears to have been that in the first District the administration conveyed an impression of strength, in the second of weakness. Just as the great families of the District—centered in and around Multan City—were incorporated into the imperial political system during and after the 1848-49 war, so did the cooption of lesser leaders in the *mofussil* get underway in 1857.

It should be stressed that British officials, however able, could not have succeeded in keeping the lid on without the aid of loyal Indian troops and the support or acquiescence of the District's inhabitants. Such assistance hinged in turn on the allegiance of certain key leaders. On the military side the role of *Wurdi-Major* Barkat Ali of Skinner's Horse was crucial. Major Chamberlain declared that, under Providence, the Europeans at Multan owed their lives to Barkat Ali.<sup>96</sup> In addition to *nimak hallal*, the *Wurdi-Major* doubtless concluded that he had a stake in the existing order that was worth running considerable risks to preserve.<sup>97</sup> In like manner, as we have seen above, the leaders of all segments of civil society perceived an advantage in siding with Government. The task of the administration was to become much harder in later decades when the "bellwethers" lost the ability automatically to deliver their "flocks."

#### NOTES

1. Steamers could ascend the Chenab River as far as Multan City, from which point men and materiel had to proceed overland.
2. This was an elite regiment which had been founded by Colonel James Skinner, a celebrated Anglo-Indian soldier of fortune. Its strong *esprit de corps* doubtless contributed to its fidelity in 1857.
3. Major G.W. Hamilton, "Multan Division Mutiny Report," 24 Feb. 1858, in Punjab Government, *Punjab Mutiny Report*, Pt. II, p. 2. Reverend J. Cave-



- Browne, *The Punjab and Delhi 1857: Being a Narrative of the Measures by Which Punjab was Saved and Delhi Recovered During the Indian Mutiny* (2 vols.; Patiala, East Punjab: Punjab Govt. Reprint, 1970), I, 123. The Katar Mukhi, once part of the Khalsa Army, had been incorporated into the Punjab Military Police as a reward for its services during the Second Anglo-Sikh War. It was composed of Punjabi Muslims and of Poorbeahs (Hindustanis) in equal numbers with a sprinkling of Gurkhas thrown in. (Herbert B. Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier in 1848-49* (2 vols., Lahore, 1964), I, 171. H.L.O. Garrett, *A Brief History of the Old Police Battalions in the Punjab* (Lahore, 1927), pp. 11-14, 16.
4. R.E. Frykenberg, "Components of Company Circari in the Carnatic, Circa 1799-1859: Another Look at the Inner Logic of Political Systems in India" Paper delivered at Duke University Symposium on Realm and Region in Pre-Industrial India, April 13-15, 1973), p. 37.
  5. Michael MacLagan, 'Clemency' Canning (London, 1962), pp. 239, 254.
  6. Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughuls* (New Delhi, 1969), p. 141.
  7. Garrett, *Old Police Battalions*, pp. 1-4. The Punjab Military Police numbered 5400 foot and 2700 horse. The four Divisions were Lahore, Jhelum, Multan and Derajat. In 1857 a Captain Tronson commanded the Multan Division. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 3.
  8. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 2-3. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 120-21. In Punjab agitation against greased cartridges first surfaced at the Ambala Musketry Instruction Depot in March, 1857. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 42.
  9. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 2-3.
  10. Punjab Govt., *Punjab Mutiny Report*, quoted in Punjab Govt., *Multan District Gazetteer, 1923-24, Part A* (Lahore, 1926), p. 69. For an instance of the widespread belief that the Mutiny was the result of a Muslim conspiracy, see: Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, XV, 1-6.
  11. F.E. Voyle, "Multan District Mutiny Report," Enclosure No. 1 to "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 28.
  12. Commissioner Hamilton to R.H. Davies, Secy. to Punjab Govt., 16 July, 1860, PSRO, Punjab General, No. 70 of 28 July 1860, pp. 6-7, 10, "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 3-6. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 92-93, 100, 120, 123-24.
  13. An extreme case of a commanding officer's faith in his men occurred in May 1857 at Peshawar. Colonel Henry Spottiswoode of the 55th Native Infantry, convinced that a move to disarm his unit had driven it to mutiny, committed suicide. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 158-70. S.S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 203-04.
  14. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography: Twentieth Century, 1901-10* (Oxford, n.d.), pp. 345-46.
  15. Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers & Men* (New York, 1974), p. 317. For the bad reputation of the Ranghars, see also, Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes: Being a reprint of the chapter on "The Races, Castes and Tribes of the People" in the Report on the Census of the Punjab by the late Sir Denzil Ibbetson, K.C.S.I.* (Lahore, 1916), p. 139.
  16. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 124-25.
  17. *Ibid.*, I, 125-26.
  18. Hamilton removed a party of Native Infantry from the Fort over the strong

objections of the military authorities.

19. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 3-5. "Multan Dist. Mutiny Reprt.," pp. 28-29. *Mooltan District Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 154. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 286. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 126-28. Offering rewards for deserters drove a wedge between the sepoys and the local populace.
20. "Multan Dist. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 29, 31-32. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 5. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, pp. 5-7. The number of ferries in 1857 is not stated, but by 1883 there were 33 on the Sutlej, 9 on the Chenab and 12 on the Ravi. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 114.
21. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 4-5. "Multan Dist. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 29-30. Capt. H.J. Hawes, "Jhang Dist. Mutiny Rept." Enclosure No. 2 to "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 36. PSRO, Punjab Political Procds., No. 47 of 5 June 1858, pp. 33-34. Kanhaya Lal, Judicial *Sarishtidar*, read correspondence addressed to sepoys and local residents and detected the suspicious missive from the *maulvi* to the *munshi*. For this and other services, he was awarded a *khillat* (dress of honor) worth Rs. 200.
22. "Multan Dist. Mutiny Rept.," p. 29, f.n. 1. The Punjab administration gained valuable time due to the telegraph (ruefully described by a sepoy awaiting execution as "the string that strangles us." S.S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 186-87. Learning of the loss of Delhi on the same day it occurred, the Lahore authorities took prompt countermeasures including interdiction of conventional channels of communication. Geography was a potent ally of the regime. It was a comparatively simple task to shut down or guard the ferries on the five bridgeless rivers which split the Province into six *doabs*.
23. "Multan Dist. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 29-30. The *faqir* was released after the recovery of Delhi. Judicial *Sarishtidar* Kanhaya Lal was in charge of spying on the temple meetings.
24. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 9, 17. "Multan Dist. Mutiny Rept.," p. 30. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 270.
25. Hindustani sepoys had made themselves doubly obnoxious in Punjab by depriving local people of military employment and boasting constantly of having conquered the country.
26. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 5. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 265-66. Summary of telegram of 30th May, 1857, from Capt. James, Secy. to Chief Commr., Rawalpindi, to Col. Macpherson, Military Secy. to Punjab Govt., Lahore, in Punjab Govt., *Press List of Mutiny Papers of 1857-58 in the Punjab Secretariat* (Lahore, 1925), p. 47. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 289. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 197-98, 209.
27. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 5-6. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 205-6. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, pp. 234-62. The three sepoy regiments at Jullundur got clean away to Delhi. *En route* they picked up another disaffected regiment at Phillaur and sacked the town of Ludhiana. The Jullundur military command made but a feeble and belated attempt at pursuit.
28. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 206-07. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 266. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 6. Summaries of telegram of 8 June 1857 from Chief. Commr., Rawalpindi, to Gen. Gowan and Col. Macpherson, Lahore; of 8 June from Gen. Gowan to Chief Commr., of 8 June from Col. Macpherson to Chief Commr.; *Press List of Mutiny Papers in*



- the *Punjab Secretariat*, p. 71. Hamilton later claimed: "The Officer in Command was opposed to the measure and the slightest hesitation . . . would have ruined the enterprise." (Hamilton to Secy. to Punjab Govt., 16 July 1860, PSRO, Punjab General, No. 70 of 28 July 1860, p. 13.) Hicks, who had thirty-four years of service, was evidently superseded because he was considered too old to act decisively. Many senior officers of the Bengal Army performed poorly in crises, notably, at Meerut, Dinapur and Julundur. (Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p. 316. M. MacLagan, 'Clemency' Canning, pp. 78-80. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 205-06. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 236-42.
29. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 6-7. The 1st Punjab Cavalry arrived first in order to pursue the sepoys in the event they suspected what was planned and bolted. The Native Infantry, however, suspected nothing.
  30. *Ibid.*, p. 7. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 266-68.
  31. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 7-8. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 268. The sepoys doubtless realized that, stranded 600 miles from Delhi in the midst of an unsympathetic populace, they stood little chance of reaching the rebel capital. It was also likely that, stationed so far from their homes in the Ganges Valley, the troops at Multan had not been heavily affected by the unrest in the Bengal Army. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, p. 207.
  32. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 12.
  33. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
  34. He had been in the Honorable Company's army for eighteen years, winning medals for valor at Chillianwala and Gujarat.
  35. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 14. "Multan Distt. Mutiny Rept.," p. 31.
  36. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 15.
  37. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
  38. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
  39. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
  40. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19.
  41. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 17.
  42. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
  43. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 270. Cave Browne's explanation for this contradictory behavior was that the 'traitor' was trying to cover himself in case the mutiny failed.
  44. Anonymous doggerel widely recited during World War I in which the narrator purports to have received word through a long chain of intermediaries that a certain woman "has a son, who has a friend/Who knows when the war is going to end." One version appears in Ralph L. Woods (ed.), *A Treasury of the Familiar* (New York, 1945), pp. 476-77.
  45. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 17.
  46. According to the "Mutiny Report" the condemned men were permitted to pass their last night on earth in "feasting and revelry." Exactly what this consisted of is not spelled out, but the implication is that it loosened their tongues in some manner.
  47. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 19.
  48. See: J. Royal Roseberry, III, "African Sloth, Oriental Stagnation, and the White Man's Burden: Non-European Peoples in British Imperial Thinking, 1857-1870" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Duke University, 1966), pp. 37-39.

49. Hamilton to Secy. to Punjab Govt., 16 July 1860, PSRO, Punjab General No. 70 of 28 July, 1860, pp. 1-23. Hamilton declared that his services must have failed to receive the recognition they indisputably deserved through a mistake: "those who acted under him and by his orders only, have reaped the full benefit, but from your Memorialist alone has due acknowledgement been withheld." The Commissioner's petition was apparently without result.
50. Commr. Hamilton to Secy., Chief Commr., 21 May 1858, PSRO, Punjab Political Procds., No. 46 of 5 June 1858, p. 4.
51. The Commissioner made no mention of the Hindu community, presumably because it was not considered to represent any danger (Hindus comprised only about a fifth of the District population). It may be inferred that Hindus kept a low profile in 1857, recalling their discomfiture in 1848-49.
52. PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 46 of 5 June 1858, p. 6.
53. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 9.
54. As an indication of the preponderance of the "sacred" over the "profane" in Multan District, there is a saying still current there that four families are Multan—Qureshis, Gardezis, Gilanis, and Khakwanis. All but the last derive their power from inherited religious standing.
55. The Diwans of Pakpattan were descended from Baba Farid Chishti (a contemporary of Bahawal Haq), who was credited with converting several of the Gugera pastoral tribes to Islam.
56. PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 47 of 5 June 1858, pp. 14-16.
57. *Ibid.*, No. 47 of 5 June 1858, p. 17.
58. *Ibid.*, No. 46 of 5 June 1858, pp. 4-5, 7.
59. On the first day's march from Multan City, the legendary Multani heat proved fatal to eight men of the left wing, 1st Bombay Europeans. The right wing of the regiment reached Multan in July and remained there for the duration.
60. "Multan Div. Mutiny Report.," pp. 12-15, 19-20.
61. Punjab as a whole made a major manpower contribution to suppression of the revolt: from May to October 1857, approximately 27,000 new troops and pounce were raised in the Province. Lt. E.H. Paske, Officiating Secy., Chief Commr., to G.F. Edmondstone, Offg. Secy., Government of India, Foreign Department, 16 Oct. 1857, Punjab Govt., *Punjab Mutiny Correspondence, Part II*, pp. 178-79.
62. Formation of the 11th Punjab Infantry Regiment began at Multan on 11 August 1857 around cadres from the Katar Mukhi and the 1st Sikh Infantry at Dera Ghazi Khan. Although it numbered 600 men by the end of the month, most were raw recruits. The 11th Infantry was not ready for action when the Gugera insurrection broke out in mid-September but did participate in the later stages of the Gugera operation.
63. PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 47 of 5 June 1858, p. 17. Van Cortlandt, who has figured before in these pages, was Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepur when an insurrection broke out in neighboring Haryana in late May 1857. Because he possessed a considerable following among ex-soldiers of the Sikh Army, the Punjab Government authorized him to raise a field force and put down the uprising. Van Cortlandt accomplished his mission and in reward was knighted a Companion of the Bath. Following the Mutiny he returned to civil administration and attained the rank of



- Commissioner of Multan before retiring in 1868]. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, I, 226-27, II, 275-76. C. Grey and H.L.O. Garrett, *European Adventurers of Northern India, 1785 to 1849* (Lahore, 1929), pp. 306-07. Major Hugh Pearse, (ed.), *Soldier and Traveller: Memoirs of Alexander Gardner, Colonel of Artillery in the Service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (London, 1898), p. 339.
64. In addition to the nomads' nostalgia for their former marauding way of life (which had been curtailed by the Company), underlying causes of the uprising included: (1) systematic oppression by Gugera amla; (2) pastoralist resentment of the Government grazing tax (*tirni*); and (3) soaring indebtedness by pastoralists in the process of conversion to agriculture.
  65. "Multan Dist. Mutiny Rept.," p. 32.
  66. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 21. Lt. N.W. Elphinstone, Assistant Commissioner (late in charge District Googaira), "Gugera Dist. Mutiny Rept.," Enclosure No. 3 to "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 44-46.
  67. Chief Commr. Punjab to Govt., 18 Sept. and 3 Oct. 1857, *Punjab Mutiny Correspondence, Part II*, pp. 59-60, 83, 85. Capt. H.J. Hawes, "Jhang Dist. Mutiny Rept.," p. 37. W.E. Purser, *Montgomery District Settlement Report* (Lahore, 1878), pp. 39-40, 44-47.
  68. These were clans of the widespread Sial Rajput tribe, whose headquarters was in Jhang.
  69. PSRO, Punjab General, No. 70 of 28 July 1860, p. 16. The risk was mitigated by the fact that the Multani pastoralists had feuds with many of the rebellious Gugera tribes. By commissioning the chieftains to repel invaders (with an implied promise of reward for good service) the Commissioner was offering them an inducement to remain loyal.
  70. The headmen must have been released from the *sadr* to mobilize their followers if they had not been allowed to return home sooner.
  71. These local headmen were most numerous in the northern and eastern parts of Multan where the pastoral tribes had maintained their cohesion and political power. As noted in the Introduction, the settled agricultural population (which was concentrated in the southwestern portion of the District) consisted of fragments of many tribes mixed together helter-skelter.
  72. PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 47 of 5 June 1858, p. 23. Sultan also provided four men for Ghulam Mustafa Khan's troop.
  73. Translation of *parwana* from Commissioner Hamilton to Machia Langrial, 18 Sept. 1857, in Colonization Officer's recommendations for a grant of land in favor of Maliks Muhammad Fazl and Bahadur, sons of Machia Langrial of Montgomery, 18 Jan. 1927, Punjab Board of Revenue (Lahore), File 301/3C/C-9/186, Keep-with No. 29, p. 53.
  74. PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 47 of 5 June 1858, p. 24. The Langrials also contributed fifteen men to Ghulam Mustafa's *rissala*.
  75. "Multan Dist. Mutiny Rept.," p. 33.
  76. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34. PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 47 of 5 June 1858, p. 24.
  77. Chief Commr. to Govt., 3 Oct. 1857, *Punjab Mutiny Correspondence, Part II*, p. 85. PSRO, Punjab General, Nos. 139-43 of 30 Jan. 1858; Nos. 1-3 of 13 Mar. 1858. Bisharat Ali's sole offense consisted of failure to obey an order for all soliders on leave to report to the army before Delhi. According to

- Barkat Ali, his brother-in-law was too ill to serve.
78. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 21-24. Major Crawford Chamberlain, "Narrative of the movements of Major C. Chamberlain's Column," Enclosure to "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 64-65, 68-69, 71-72. Barkat Ali spurned a shouted offer from the insurgents to make him their leader if he handed over the five Europeans with the besieged party.
  79. The collapse of the uprising was hastened by the death in battle of the redoubtable Ahmad Khan Kharral on 21st September.
  80. Maj. F.C. Marsden, Deputy Commissioner Gugera, "Gugera Mutiny Rept.," Enclosure No. 4 to "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," p. 63. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 26-27. Maj. Chamberlain, "Chamberlain's Column," p. 78.
  81. "Multan Div. Mutiny Rept.," pp. 24-25.
  82. PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 47 to 5 June 1858, pp. 14-16. Hamilton may have been enaging in wishful thinking. The Baba Farid and Bahawal Haq families had been at loggerheads for centuries. It is unlikely therefore that the disciples of the former *pir*, who were numerous among the insurgents, would have been much impressed by the stance of the descendant of the latter.
  83. PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 47 of 5 June 1858, pp. 17-18.
  84. *Punjab and Delhi*, II, 253-57. The sepoys at Amritsar quit the Punjab via Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ambala, and Delhi; those at Lahore by way of Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Sahranpur, and Meerut. The Multan contingent was to have exited via Hariana. When eastern Punjab was clear of sepoys, the units at Rawalpindi, Peshawar, and other western posts were marched under heavy guard to Ambala for disbandment in lots of twenty.
  85. PSRO, Punjab General, No. 70 of 28 July, 1860, p. 19. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 71. In his account of this affair, Hamilton returned to his wonted dispassionate manner.
  86. The personnel of the Native Horse Artillery Troop (which had been disarmed as a precautionary measure the previous August) were also involved in this outbreak.
  87. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 71. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, II, 256. Commr. Hamilton to R. Temple, Secy. Chief Commr., 21 Sept. 1858, PSRO, Punjab Political, Nos. 28-30 of 2 Oct. 1858.
  88. Secy., Lieutenant-Governor Punjab, to Secretary to Govt Foreign Dept., 13 Sept. 1860, PBOR, File No. 131/1575.
  89. Conspicuous among the pursuers were the dependents of the *Mukhdum* of Sher Shah, whose ancestor Sayyid Shah Ali Muhammad, had migrated from Meshed, Persia in the Sixteenth Century A.D.
  90. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 71. Norgate (1824-1894) is best known for his translation of the memoirs of *Subadar* Sita Ram. He was attached to the 69th Native Infantry at the time of the Multan mutiny and subsequently commanded the 12th Punjab Infantry during the Bundelkhund campaign of 1859.
  91. Secy., Lt.-Govr. Punjab, to Secy. Govt For. Dept., 13 Sept. 1860, PBOR, File No. 131/1575. Papers re continuance of land revenue assignments to Sultan Hiraj and Walidad Langrial of Multan District, PBOR, File No. 131/1867.
  92. H.L.O. Garrett, *Old Police Battalions*, p. 16. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and*



Delhi, II, 256-57. [The Reverend Cave-Browne observed complacently: "Thus did the Mooltan traitors . . . relieve the Punjab of their presence."

93. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, II, 256.
94. The state of mind of the Multan sepoys doubtless resembled that of two regiments that had stampeded and been exterminated the previous summer. S.S. Thorburn commented: "The cases of the 26th Native Infantry at Lahore and the 51st Native Infantry at Peshawar show what a baited life most disarmed sepoy regiments must for some time have been leading. For both escape was hopeless, destruction certain, yet in their desperation they rushed upon death." *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 217-21. The Multan troops may have been further unnerved by rumors of proposals that been mooted for getting rid of the disarmed sepoys. Some Englishmen advocated executing everybody; more moderate individuals would have settled for hanging one in ten and transporting the remainder to the Andamans for life. Cave-Browne, *Punjab and Delhi*, II, 254.
95. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 72.
96. Crawford Chamberlain, Commander 1st Irregular Cavalry, to Secy, Chief Commr., 14 Jan. 1858, PSRO, Punjab General, No. 139 of 30 Jan. 1858.
97. In consideration of his fidelity, Barkat Ali was awarded one-third of the property of his deceased brother-in-law Bisharat Ali (all of which had been confiscated for the latter's alleged treason). PSRO, Punjab General, No. 59 of 5 June 1858.

## CHAPTER TEN

### The Post-Revolt Political Settlement, 1858-1880

"... the police administration will be rendered more effective and more agreeable to the people who are more likely to pay respect to their local and hereditary superiors than to the subordinate police authorities whose place they are to occupy."—Commissioner G.W. Hamilton, reporting on the investment of local notables with police jurisdiction in Multan Division, PSRO, Punjab Judicial Procds., No. 15 of 25 May 1861, p. 17.

Following the 1857 Revolt, the partnership between Multani elites and Government continued and expanded. Notables great and small were remunerated for wartime services. Strenuous efforts were undertaken, with varying degrees of success, to tap the local influence and knowledge of traditional leaders for administrative purposes. A more liberal policy towards revenue assignments was evident.

#### I

During the Dalhousie era (1848-56) the Government of India had looked with disfavor on indigenous intermediaries, considering them to be parasites without popular followings who could safely be phased out. One manifestation of this outlook had been an aversion to creating additional *jagirdars*. The events of 1857 (when some traditional leaders provided valuable support and others proved to be dangerous enemies) forced a reappraisal. It became official policy to foster a strong indigenous aristocracy as a bulwark against future upheavals. *Jagirs*, which conferred a greater aura of dignity and independ-



ence than cash stipends, came back into favor as a means of reward.<sup>1</sup> The pre-1857 "leveling policy" always had been liable to tempering by pragmatic considerations. As we have seen, Multani elites had been amply recompensed for their support in 1848-49. As a result of the shift in overall policy, however, largesse was scattered with an even freer hand in Multan after the 1857 Revolt than after the previous conflict.

The Multani chiefs were not shy about speaking out when they considered their services to have been undervalued. The first round of rewards for assistance rendered in 1857-58 occasioned grumbling by several recipients. Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani in particular was disappointed when the *jagir* of Rs. 1000 recommended for him by Commissioner Hamilton was scaled down to Rs. 500 by Lieutenant-Governor Robert Montgomery.<sup>2</sup> Hamilton conveyed these murmurings to the Lieutenant-Governor, who agreed to consider proposals for supplementary rewards. In July 1860 the Commissioner recommended additional compensation for six individuals in Multan Division. Hamilton pointed out that, though his Division harbored many gentlemen of family and influence, few of them enjoyed large *jagirs* or pensions from the state. It was therefore all the more to their credit that they had behaved so well during the recent crisis. The proposed grants were necessary not only to requite past services but also "to maintain in positions of eminence families whose representatives have in times of danger proved loyalty and fidelity and to whom we may in future look for support." Hamilton's recommendations were adopted with some modifications.<sup>3</sup>

Table 1 shows (in final form) the grants of the three largest beneficiaries of Government's favor.<sup>4</sup> On the other end of the scale, Table 2 gives the remuneration of three representative rural notables of the *chaudhri* variety.<sup>5</sup>

## II.

In the 1860s the Punjab Government sought to harness the influence and experience of traditional leaders. To this end three new offices were created: Honorary Magistrate, Honorary Police Officer, and *zaildar*. This experiment had mixed results because some of the individual appointed had a quite different conception of the role of "natural leader" than did the authorities.

TABLE I

Name	<i>Jagir</i> (Rs. <i>per annum</i> )	Land (With Rs. <i>per annum</i> value where known)	Dress of Honor ( <i>Khilat</i> ) (Rs. value)	Other
<i>Mukhdum</i> Shah Mahmud Oureshi	1750 (perpetual) <sup>1</sup>	Garden, Multan City (150)	600	Cash present of Rs. 3000 <sup>2</sup>
Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani	1000 (life) <sup>3</sup>	—	1000	Title of Khan Bahadur; handsome sword and brace of pistols
Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai	1036 (life) <sup>4</sup>	Garden, Multan City; well, Bahawalpur State	600	Reimbursement for expenses in the field <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This replaced the *Mukhdum*'s pension awarded after Annexation, which at some point had been raised from Rs. 1,300 to Rs. 1,750 *per annum*.

<sup>2</sup>The cash present was justified as belated payment for property plundered by Mulraj's rebels during the 1848-49 war. Shah Mahmud had not put in a claim for compensation immediately after annexation because he was expecting a Rs. 10,000 grant for repairs to his shrines (which was squelched by Dalhousie).

<sup>3</sup>Lieutenant-Governor Montgomery restored the cut in Ghulam Mustafa's *jagir* upon learning that his predecessor, John Lawrence, had approved in principle of a Rs. 1,000 one prior to leaving office.

<sup>4</sup>This replaced Sadiq Muhammad's yearly pension of Rs. 2000 granted after Annexation. He did not lose, however, by trading in his pension, for his total income from *jagir*, garden, and well together amounted to Rs. 2,937 *per annum*.

<sup>5</sup>This referred to expenses while on campaign against the Guggera insurgents.



TABLE 2

Name	Jagir (Rs. per annum)	Dress of Honor ( <i>Khilat</i> ) (Rs. value)	Other
Sultan Hiral	100 (life)	75	Cash presented of Rs. 300; Expenses while in the field
Machia Langrial	150 (life)	75	Cash present of Rs. 300; Expenses while in the field
Walidad Langrial <sup>1</sup>	300 (life)	—	

<sup>1</sup>Walidad was the son of Bahawal (brother and co-chief of Machia) who was killed fighting the sepoys. By order of Commissioner Hamilton, a monument was erected over Bahawal's remains. Walidad succeeded his father as co-chief of the Langrials.

In 1860 the Punjab Government began empowering *jagirdars* and other eminent men to try petty civil and criminal cases in order to relieve overcrowding in *talhsildars* courts. It was expected that the Honorary Magistrates' local knowledge would more than compensate for lack of formal training.<sup>6</sup> Lieutenant-Governor R.H. Davies observed in 1871 that such magistracies provided "employment not above their capacity for gentlemen who would otherwise have no interest in the administration."<sup>7</sup> In 1876 forty-nine honorary magistrates disposed of 12,201 civil suits, 5 per cent of the provincial total.<sup>8</sup>

Honorary Magistrates were late in coming to Multan. In response to an inquiry from the provincial government, the Commissioner stated in January 1863 that he could not recommend any individuals from Multan City for appointment. "Bad party spirit" was so pronounced there that introduction of Honorary Magistrates would only bring discredit upon an institution which had worked well in other Divisions.<sup>9</sup> In 1877 four Honorary Magistrates were appointed for Multan City. The most prominent were *Mukhdum* Bahawal Bakhsh (son of *Mukhdum* Shah Mahmud), Narain Das, chief priest (*mahant*) of the Prahladpuri Temple (the leading Hindu shrine of the town), and Ghulam Kadir Khan Khakwari (son of Ghulam Mustafa Khan). These functionaries tried civil cases involving no more than Rs. 100 and exercised the criminal powers of a Third Class Magistrate. Two more Honorary Magistrates were added in 1879.<sup>10</sup>

Under the Sikh regime rural notables or *chaudhris*, each with influence over a group of villages, had assisted in revenue collection and law enforcement in exchange for reduced assessments or shares of the revenue. Following Annexation *chaudhris* were bypassed because the administration suspected them of helping the Sikhs to oppress the peasantry and believed it could dispense with the services of intermediaries. As part of the general post-Mutiny reaction in favor of "natural leaders," efforts were made to utilize rural notables. The first step occurred in 1861 with the introduction of Honorary Police Officers. Where responsible individuals with a dominant position in well-defined tracts could be located, they were invested with police jurisdiction and paid salaries by the Police Department. The existing police establishments in these zones were abolished. The sorry performance of the *chauki* system during the Gugera outbreak may well have contributed to the adoption of this policy.



In reporting on the establishment of an Honorary Police system in his jurisdiction (May 1861), Commissioner Hamilton declared that the scheme was especially well-suited to Multan Division. All its Districts contained large expanses of pasture land, thinly-populated by nomads but abounding in cattle. Such cattle-lifters' paradises could not be covered by regular police except at a cost far beyond the resources of the country. In the Commissioner's opinion, men of influence and position could enforce the law more effectively—and at less cost—than the official police they replaced. Under Hamilton's proposals, 38 Honorary Police jurisdictions (carrying salaries of Rs. 150 to Rs. 300) would be set up in Multan Division: 8 in Multan District, 12 in Gugera, 13 in Jhang, and 5 in Muzaffargarh.<sup>11</sup> The total cost of the Honorary Officers would be Rs. 7,000 per annum, Rs. 3,452 less than the regular police they were supplanting. Nearly all the individuals nominated were known personally to the Commissioner, who strove to place them in jurisdictions where their influence was likely to be exerted beneficially and local prejudices or class enmities would not interfere. Hamilton's proposals were sanctioned by the Punjab Government.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the pains taken in their selection, the Honorary Police Officers of Multan Division fell into lax ways due to want of close supervision by the District Deputy Commissioners.<sup>13</sup> In 1869 Lieutenant-Governor Donald McLeod called for an investigation, asserting that Police *zaildars* (as Honorary Police Officers had been redesignated) were more costly in Multan Division than anywhere else yet gave the least satisfaction.<sup>14</sup> A probe led to the removal of four out of six Police *zaildars* in Multan District, four out of seven in Montgomery, and nine out of eleven in Jhang.<sup>15</sup>

The next step in the harnessing of *chaudhri*-type leaders was the creation of *zaildars*. A *zaildar*—who was remunerated by one per cent of the land revenue of his bailiwick—assisted the authorities in revenue collection, settlement work, and law enforcement within a particular cluster of villages (*zail*). *Zaildars* were the brain child of Settlement Commissioner Edward Prinsep, who introduced them during the settlements of Lahore, Gujranwala, and Gujrat Districts in the mid-1860s. Prinsep's rationale for his innovation revealed that memories of the Mutiny still haunted officials: "Should occasion come round of local disturbance, the arrangements effected at this

settlement will place at the disposal of the authorities a force of at least 5000 men strong, enough to form six regiments of special constables."<sup>16</sup>

*Zaildars* were introduced into Multan District in the course of the Second Regular Settlement (1873-80). Seventy-nine were appointed—two of the Police variety and seventy-seven of the newer general purpose type. It is to be feared however that in many cases the designation of *zaildars* was nothing more than a paper exercise. Although *zail* boundaries were supposed to reflect tribal divisions, in much of the District the population was so mixed that it was impossible to point to the dominant tribe in a given locality.<sup>17</sup>

An enlightening human core sample from the *zaildari* ranks was Machia the Langrial, whose exploits in the Mutiny were noticed in the previous chapter. In 1861 he was appointed Honorary Police Officer for Serai Sidhu East at a salary of Rs. 200 per annum. His charge comprised 270 square miles with a population of 3750. During the investigation into Multan Division Police *zaildars*, the Langrial was described by the District Superintendent of Police as one of the worst *zaildars* and the head of a gang of cattle-lifters. He was dismissed in 1870 even though the Deputy Inspector-General of Police (Lahore Circle) favored keeping him on for purely political reasons.<sup>18</sup> Machia was evidently too influential to be shelved for long because he reappeared among the new crop of *zaildars* appointed under the Second Regular Settlement.<sup>19</sup>

### III

The bestowal of *jagirs* on prominent men was one facet of a more positive attitude towards revenue assignments in general. These included both large grants for military or political service (*jagirs*) and smaller ones for religious or charitable objects (*muafis*). Prior to the Mutiny Chief Commissioner John Lawrence had called for the resumption of *muafis* for the support of Muslim *faqirs'* hermitages (*takiyas*) and Hindu rest houses (*dharmshalas*), branding such institutions as nurseries of mendicancy, crime, and unnatural vice: "The abolition of monasteries in Protestant countries caused that class of men to disappear in a few years, and so will a similar system operate on the communities of *fakirs*."<sup>20</sup> In the more cautious



atmosphere of the post-1857 era it was deemed politic to cultivate any class that might possess influence, whether large chiefs or minor religious figures. Although touted as the province par excellence of peasant proprietors, Punjab came to have a larger share of its land revenue alienated than any other province in India.<sup>21</sup>

In Multan District the amount of revenue alienated climbed from Rs. 12,914 or 2.7 per cent of the total *jama* in 1860 to Rs. 21,921 or 3.2 per cent of the total in 1880. As significant as the overall increase was the trend towards grants in perpetuity as opposed to those for a specific period (one or more lives) or the maintenance of an institution. In 1880 Rs. 12,237 or 56 per cent of the total amount alienated were perpetual in comparison with Rs. 3026 or 23 per cent of the whole in 1860.<sup>22</sup>

The award of *jagirs* to Multani chieftains has been adequately treated above. The following two cases will illustrate the purposes for which *muafis* were granted.

A much revered Hindu shrine was situated at a tank called Suraj Kund (Sun Pool) four miles south of Multan City.<sup>23</sup> Under the Sikhs, the custodian of the shrine had held seven wells with an annual revenue of Rs. 368 rent-free except for a quit-rent (*nazarana*) of Rs. 150. He also had been paid Rs. 5 in cash *per diem*. At Annexation the cash stipend of the incumbent, Baba Mangal Dass, was fixed at Rs. 2.5 daily for life. Mangal Dass died in 1851. Upon the death of his successor Baba Ram Dass in 1856, the rent-free grant was resumed. The head of the shrine continued to hold the wells but paid the full revenue. In 1858 the *jama* was lowered to Rs. 220. Through an oversight the Suraj Kund case was omitted when the Punjab Government's recommendations concerning the *muafi* grants of Multan Division were transmitted to the Government of India in 1860. In 1866 some respectable traders of Multan and the keeper of the shrine petitioned for release of the wells. At the recommendation of the provincial administration, the Government of India in 1867 released the land during the pleasure of Government and good behavior of the incumbent, subject to a quit-rent of Rs. 110. The quit-rent was lower than in the Sikh era in order to compensate for the loss of the guardian's cash allowance.<sup>24</sup>

The funeral monument (*samadh*) of Diwan Sawan Mal stood east of the Am Khas Garden outside Multan City. Unable to maintain the *Samadh*, Diwan Hari Singh (only son of Diwan Mulraj) applied in 1876 for state assistance.<sup>25</sup> Charles Roe, the

District Settlement Officer, and J.B. Lyall, Settlement Commissioner for the Multan and Derajat Divisions, recommended assigning for the upkeep of the monument the revenue of five wells with an area of 65 acres and an assessment of Rs. 73-13. The *samadh* was held to merit preservation as a historical memorial to the long and successful administration of Sawan Mal.<sup>26</sup> In January 1877, the Punjab Government requested the Government of India to sanction the proposed grant in time for it to be announced simultaneously with the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India. After an unexplained delay of five years, the central government approved the award in September 1882.<sup>27</sup>

By 1860 the Multani Muslim elite appeared to have made a remarkable comeback from its eclipse under Sikh hegemony and to be in a most favorable position *vis-à-vis* the rival Hindu community. Superficially, the Muslim upper classes' situation improved still farther in the following years as Government busily created Honorary Magistrates, Honorary Police Officers, and *zaildars* to enlist the services of "natural leaders." Outward appearances however were quite deceiving. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, potent forces were at work under the surface to undermine the position of traditional power brokers.

## NOTES

1. Sir James Dowie, *Punjab Land Administration Manual* (Lahore, 1931), pp. 32, 62. Some Punjab officials remained hostile towards revenue assignments, Financial Commissioner R.N. Cust declaring: "We are placed in the singular position of paying the whole of our own ample establishments, civil and military, in cash, while the servants of all kinds of the former Government and a great many other classes, and the descendants of former robber chiefs fatten like drones on the honey of a busy hive". Robert Cust, *Manual for the Guidance of Revenue Officers in the Punjab*, p. 7.
2. In 1859 the chief executive of Punjab was upgraded from Chief Commissioner to Lieutenant-Governor.



3. Hamilton to Secy., Punjab Govt., 4 July 1860, PSRO, Punjab General Procds., No. 49 of 15 Sept. 1860. Secy., Punjab Govt., to Secy., Govt. of India, Foreign Dept., 13 Sept. 1860, *Ibid.*, No. 50 of 15 Sept. 1860.
4. Hamilton to Secy., Chief Commr. Punjab, 21 May 1858, PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 47 of 5 June 1858. Secy., Gol. For. Dept., to Sir John Lawrence, Chief Commr. Punjab, 9 July 1858, *Ibid.*, No. 16 of 21 Aug. 1858. Hamilton to Secy., PG 6 Dec. 1859, Punjab General, No. 72 of 7 Jan. 1860. Secy. PG to Secy., Gol. For. Dept., 3 Jan. 1860, *Ibid.*, No. 76 of 7 Jan. 1860. *Ibid.*, No. 49-50 of 15 Sept. 1860. G.L. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, II, 393.
5. PSRO, Punjab Political, No. 47 of 5 June 1858; No. 16 of 21 Aug. 1858. Papers re continuance of land revenue assignments to Sultan Hiraj and Walidad Langrial of Multan District., Punjab Board of Revenue, File No. 131/1867.
6. Ram Lal Handa, *A History of the Development of the Judiciary in the Punjab, 1864-1884* (Lahore, 1927), pp. 27-28, 44.
7. Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor in the Judicial Department, 26 September, 1871, Punjab Government, *Report on the Administration of Civil Justice in the Punjab and its Dependencies, for the Year 1870* (Lahore, 1871), p. 1.
8. *Punjab Civil Justice Report for 1876* (Lahore, 1877), p. 13.
9. W. Ford, Commr. Multan, to Secy., PG, 2 Jan. 1864, PSRO, Punjab Judicial, No. 56 of 11 April 1863. Unfortunately, the Commissioner did not state whether "bad party spirit" referred to Hindu-Muslim antagonism or rivalry among the leading Muslim families, both of which are known to have existed at later date.
10. Punjab Government, *The Quarterly Civil List for the Punjab, Corrected up to 1st January, 1880* (Lahore, 1880) p. 106. *Quarterly Civil List, Punjab, Corrected up to 1st April, 1880*, (Lahore, 1880), p. 106.
11. In some cases two individuals shared a jurisdiction and the stipend.
12. Hamilton to Punjab Judicial Commr., 6 May 1861. PSRO, Punjab Judicial, No. 16 of 25 May 1861. Secy. PG to Judl. Commr., 21 May 1861, *Ibid.*, No. 16 of 25 May 1861.
13. Hamilton, who doubtless would kept his creations on a tight rein, was transferred out of the Division in 1861.
14. Assistant Secy. PG to Lt. Col. J.W. Younghusband, Officiating Under-Secretary Punjab Civil (Police) Department, 2 Oct. 1869, IOR, Punjab Police Procds., Range 442, Vol. 54, No. 10 (A) of Oct. 1870, p. 37.
15. Lt.-Col. Younghusband to Secy. PG, 15 Jan. 1870, *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 48-51. Younghusband to Commr. Multan, 18 Oct. 1870, *Ibid.*, p. 61. The number of positions evidently had been reduced since 1861.
16. Punjab Govt., *Report on the Revenue Administration of the Punjab and Its Dependencies for 1865-66* (Lahore, 1866), pp. 65-66, 87.
17. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, pp. 78-89.
18. PSRO, Punjab Judicial No. 15 of 25 May 1861. Lt.-Col. Younghusband to Secy. PG, 15 Jan. 1870. Younghusband to Commr. Multan, 18 Oct. 1870, IOR, Punjab Police Procds., Rang 442, Vol. 54, No. 10(A) of Oct. 1870, pp. 46-47, 61.
19. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 67.
20. Douie, *Punjab Land Administration Manual*, pp. 34-35.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
22. Punjab Govt., *Punjab Revenue Administration Report, 1859-60* (Lahore, 1860), Statistical Tables, No. XVI. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 138-39.
23. *Multan Gazetteer, 1923-24, Pt. A*, p. 290. Suraj Kund was sacred to the Sun God and was also identified as the spot where the gods had descended to earth in order to appease the anger of the Man-Lion avatar of Vishnu after his slaying of the demon Hiranyakasipu.
24. National Archives of India, Government of India Foreign (Revenue) Proceedings, Nos. 33-35 (A) of January, 1867.
25. J.B. Lyall, Settlement Commissioner, Multan and Derajat Divisions, to L.H. Griffin, Secretary, Punjab Government, Multan, 16 December 1876, Report of Settlement Officer Charles Roe, 13 December 1876, NAI, Gol Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue) Proceedings, No. 11(B) of October 1882. Hari Singh was employed by Government as a *munsif* (subordinate judge) in Gurdaspur District.
26. Lyall to Griffin, 16 December 1876, Report of Charles Roe, 13 December 1876, *Ibid.*
27. PG to GoI Foreign Department, 18 January 1877, PG to Gol, 30 April, 1881 PG to Gol, 27 January 1882, Gol to PG, 29 September 1882, *Ibid.*, No. 11(B) of October 1882. In addition, proprietary rights to two acres within the monument enclosure were granted to Sawan Mal's descendants.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### Judicial and Revenue Administration, 1858-1880

"The flood of litigation has year by year been rising higher and higher till at last it threatens to swamp all other work." Lieutenant-Governor R.H. Davies in Punjab Government, *Punjab Civil Justice Report for 1870* (Lahore, 1871), p. 3.

"He [Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani] continued the traditions of the Sikh revenue administration, which was nowhere more vigorous or successful than within the governorship of Multan."—C.L. Tupper, Under Secretary of Revenue to Government of India, Minute of 19 Nov. 1879, NAI, GoI, Home, Revenue, and Agriculture (Revenue) Procs., No. 109(A) of December 1879.

This chapter will survey developments in the diverse fields of judicial and revenue administration between the end of the Mutiny and 1880. As a result of sweeping changes in the Punjab judicial system, litigation skyrocketed in Multan and pleaders put in an appearance. In the revenue sphere, the First and Second Regular Settlements of Multan were carried out. Since both incorporated inflexible demands, neither was entirely successful. During the same time span, a family of Pathan revenue farmers operated fluctuating assessments with conspicuous success in a remote corner of the District.<sup>1</sup>

#### I

Before focusing upon judicial administration in Multan, it will be necessary to sketch a major transformation in the provincial judicial system. The system established immediately after Annexation had been made simple and flexible in order to ease

the transition to imperial rule. Once the loyalty of Punjab had been demonstrated in 1857-58, the time was considered ripe to implant the complex judicial apparatus of the older provinces of British India. Change was said to be imperative to keep pace with rapid advances in wealth and civilization.

Robert N. Cust, Judicial Commissioner 1861-62, insisted upon stricter adherence to rules and more paperwork than hitherto. During his tenure the Indian Penal Code was extended to Punjab (1862).<sup>2</sup> A fellow officer warned Herbert Edwardes, newly returned from England, that "you will find work increased—and such an increase of *aileen* [regulation]—from Cust's rulings! And Criminal Codes and Procedures—I don't feel happy—but it is all new and more troublesome to me."<sup>3</sup>

In 1862 Cust complained that the province was lagging behind the rest of India in adopting the Indian Civil Procedure Code of 1859 and proposed that it be introduced at the commencement of 1864. In Cust's opinion, the existing prohibition against lawyers practising in Punjab could not be maintained much longer. This ban was unjust and contrary to the needs of society. The Judicial Commissioner asserted that criminal, revenue and political work took precedence over civil justice. To remedy this, he recommended an increase in number of judges and the creation of an independent judiciary.<sup>4</sup>

In 1864 the Officiating Judicial Commissioner, E.L. Brandreth, conceded lawyers probably would have to be admitted to the courts. If so many new laws had not been passed and if judges possessed more leisure in which to advise litigants, Government "might well have hesitated to incur the evil of pleaders."<sup>5</sup> As things were, suitors needed legal advice. A recognized native bar which could be regulated was preferable to "the ignorant, irresponsible crowd of petition-writers that at present attend the courts."<sup>6</sup>

A full-fledged Regulation Province judicial system was introduced into Punjab in 1866. The Indian Civil Procedure Code went into effect, lawyers were permitted to practice, and a Chief Court was established at Lahore.<sup>7</sup>

After 1866, the volume of judicial business increased dramatically.<sup>8</sup>



Year	Number of civil suits instituted
1867	144,628
1868	159,550
1869	164,595
1870	205,606
1871	218,925

In 1871 Lieutenant-Governor R.H. Davies complained that District Officers, who ought to be in the saddle getting to know the people and country and seeing to collection of the revenue, were kept chained to their desks by judicial work.<sup>9</sup> In 1875 the nucleus of a separate judiciary was created to relieve the burden of executive officers in Districts and *tahsils* where litigation was the heaviest.<sup>10</sup>

The Punjab Government looked with complacency on the mushrooming of litigation. In 1872 Lieutenant-Governor Davies proclaimed that an enlightened regime was obligated to provide cheap and speedy justice. If the people flocked to court, it would be unfair to deny them on the abstract theory that so much litigation was unhealthy.<sup>11</sup>

## II

During the 1860s and 1870s the volume of litigation swelled faster in Multan District than in Punjab as a whole. Between 1862 and 1880, the number of civil suits more than quadrupled in the District compared with a provincial increase of approximately two and one-half fold.<sup>12</sup>

Year	Number of civil suits instituted in Multan	Number of civil suits instituted in Punjab
1862	1547	99,660
1870	3430	205,606
1880	6724	256,015

From time to time, the Commissioners of Multan commented on judicial matters. In 1862, 102 suits concerning marriage or betrothal were filed in Multan Division, 23 in *Zillah* Multan.

Commissioner William Ford remarked that the would-be bridegroom generally sued for breach of promise instead of the friends of the jilted lady as in England. This was the case because the bride's family received a price for her, instead of giving a dowry as was common in other sections of India. Women being scarce, bidding for brides was keen and contracts were frequently broken. Breach of promise cases generated much party feeling and the losing side commonly suspected the court of partiality.<sup>13</sup> Ford reported in 1864 that marriage and betrothal suits continued to cause difficulty, it being often questionable whether a ceremony had taken place. In order to facilitate confirmation of marriages and betrothals, restrictions should be imposed upon time, place, procedure, and the persons qualified to officiate.<sup>14</sup>

In 1869 Officiating Commissioner A. Brandreth remarked that the small number of civil suits instituted in Multan City was "popularly said to have been due to an unpaid and unrecognized judge, the late Mukhdoom [Shah Mahmud Qureshi], whose great influence was directed towards getting disputes settled without going to law about them. He was a very fine specimen of a native of rank, and his death has been a great misfortune."<sup>15</sup>

Brandreth complained that judicial officers were pressured to aim for a low average duration of cases. A judge proud of his average did not wait for missing evidence or take the time to get to the bottom of a case and generally made his court "a terror to the Country."<sup>16</sup> The people appreciated long, patient hearings and resented summonses to appear in court on twenty-four hours notice.<sup>17</sup> In Brandreth's opinion, petty suits were too numerous as a result of low court costs. "Suits for 3 or 4 shillings on account of goods sold, carried through the Court at a cost of 9 pence, including everything, are great evils."<sup>18</sup> Such suits caused much inconvenience and rendered the Government unpopular.<sup>19</sup>

According to Commissioner Brandreth Multan was too poor to support pleaders. There were two native pleaders at Multan City, one of whom had a bad reputation. Lawyers were capable of giving useful assistance to the court but tended to think too much of themselves and to assume dictatorial airs, behavior which could not be tolerated as it lowered the position of the court. Each judge should be authorized to license four men to plead in his court until trained lawyers became



available. Honesty and respectability were more important than legal ability. The need was for persons to help the ignorant state their cases intelligibly and to conduct the suits of those unable to attend court. It was unwise to teach pleaders legal technicalities which could be employed to delay and frustrate justice.<sup>20</sup> The Punjab government rejected Brandreth's proposals as contrary to the act governing the licensing of pleaders. The supply of qualified lawyers was increasing rapidly and a sufficient number would doubtless come to Multan if there was a need for their services.<sup>21</sup>

The Indian Civil Procedure Code, unlike the Punjab Civil Code it superseded, did not empower judges to refer cases to arbitration and did not allow appeals from the decisions of arbitrators. As a result, the proportion of suits settled by arbitration declined sharply.<sup>22</sup> Arbitration was more popular in

Year	Percentage of suits arbitrated in Punjab
1866	6.7%
1867	4.9%
1868	4.0%
1869	3.1%
1870	2.4%

Multan than in the province as a whole, 3.4 per cent of civil suits being arbitrated in that District in 1870.<sup>23</sup> In 1870 Commissioner Brandreth proposed restoring the right of appeal in arbitration cases and setting up courts of arbitrators to handle petty cases in each town and circle of villages. Arbitration had been in general use during Sikh times and the people would gladly return to it.<sup>24</sup> Government disregarded Brandreth's proposal and welcomed the decrease in arbitration. It took the position that arbitrators were generally corrupt.<sup>25</sup>

### III

John Morris, later Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, conducted the First Regular Settlement (1857-60).<sup>26</sup> The assessment circles (*chaks*) of the Second Summary Settlement were retained under different names:<sup>27</sup>

Circle	Old Name	New Name
Adjoining rivers	<i>khadar</i>	(a) on Ravi, <i>bet</i> (b) on Chenab, <i>hitar</i> (c) on Sutlej, <i>khadar</i>
At medium distance from rivers	<i>mashmulah</i>	(a) on Ravi and Sutlej, <i>banger</i> (b) on Chenab, <i>utar</i>
Farthest inland	<i>bangar</i>	everywhere, <i>rawa</i>

In view of the loyalty of Multan during the Mutiny, substantial reductions were considered to be in order. Morris struck off the enhancements of the Second Summary Settlement to relieve actual distress and made further cuts with a view to allaying widespread displeasure over the previous Settlement.<sup>28</sup> The Regular Settlement demand of Rs. 482,928 was approximately Rs. 100,000 or 16 per cent under that of the Second Summary Settlement.<sup>29</sup> The *tahsil jamas* were as follows:<sup>30</sup>

Tahsil	Demand (Rs)	Percentage of reduction from Second Summary Settlement
Multan	107,927	7 %
Shujabad	117,744	16%
Lodhran	114,155	20%
Mailsi	100,461	23%
Serai Sidhu	47,399	10%

The annual measurements of river-flooded (*sailab*) tracts—which had not worked well under the previous Settlement—were eliminated. Since the new assessments were entirely fixed, Morris endeavored to set them so low that they could be collected without hardship even in bad years.<sup>31</sup>

Commissioner G.W. Hamilton argued forcefully for retention of the fluctuating *sailab* assessments, which had failed due to an error in implementation rather than any inherent flaws (see Chapter Eight). He was overruled by the Punjab Government, which feared that annual measurements would result in much corruption and relied on alluvion and diluvion rules copied from the North-Western Provinces to cushion the impact



of a fixed demand. Under these rules riverine villages were surveyed annually, lands added by river action being assessed and the revenue of lands washed away being remitted. The assessment was reduced where river action replaced good soil with bad. The alluvion and diluvion procedures were found to be ill-adapted to South-West Punjab where land usually became uncultivable when the supply of river water failed. As the quantity and quality of land remained unchanged, relief was not granted. Despite the lightness of the First Regular Settlement *jamas*, many villages were ruined.<sup>32</sup>

As an additional safeguard, Morris made remissible all revenue from *sailab* and canal tracts. The remissible portion constituted 56 per cent of the entire demand. Remissions were not to be granted in moderately poor seasons but only in the event of disastrous water shortages. The scheme was never used because Morris' rules for granting remissions were defective and, more importantly, because no agency was created to administer those rules.<sup>33</sup>

The First Regular Settlement was approved in 1860 for ten years. On the whole the revenue was collected without difficulty, though the rigidity of the demand caused some local distress.<sup>34</sup>

Multan fared far better under the Regular Settlement than did neighboring Muzaffargarh under Summary Settlements. Though poorer and less populous than Multan,<sup>35</sup> Muzaffargarh was more heavily assessed. In 1859-60 the Muzaffargarh *jama* amounted to Rs. 621,533, Rs. 81,593 of which could not be realized. A revised Summary Settlement was instituted and in 1864-65 the demand was Rs. 491,432, only Rs. 90 being in arrears. The assessment was still higher than could be comfortably paid.<sup>36</sup>

The woes of Ghauspur in Muzaffargarh illustrated the damage which overassessment and settlement errors could inflict. In 1850 a Settlement Officer imposed a *jama* of Rs. 170 on the village, which was situated at the tail of a canal. He noted that the assessment would bear lightly if the canal was kept clear but would break down otherwise. Although the canal deteriorated steadily, the demand was enhanced to Rs. 300 in 1857 and to Rs. 450 in 1860. Ghauspur often did not receive sufficient water to mature the autumn (*kharif*) harvest. Moreover, the floods of late summer frequently stood in the fields too long for the spring (*rabi*) crop to be sown. At the 1860

Summary Settlement, surveyors classified as Government waste (*rakh*) 192 acres of the 650 acre village. The Sundered portion contained three revenue-paying wells. The grazing-tax (*tirni*) was levied upon all village cattle, including beasts employed in agriculture which were supposed to be exempt, whether or not they grazed in Government waste. Many cultivators absconded, some to neighboring villages, some to Bahawalpur, and some to Dera Ghazi Khan. The plight of Ghauspur passed unnoticed till 1871 when its *lambardar*, Ramzan, sought leave to resign, declaring that he could not collect the revenue and that all his property had been sold at auction to meet the demand. He offered to remain in office if the village was given relief. The entire tract appropriated for government jungle was returned but the question of lowering the assessment was deferred until the impending resettlement of the District.<sup>37</sup> A.O. Hume, Government of India Secretary for Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, observed, "until the village is half ruined and deserted, the local officers say nothing and the local government hears nothing."<sup>38</sup>

The politically motivated First Regular Settlement was unsatisfactory from a revenue standpoint. In the belief that Multan could bear a substantially higher assessment, Government in 1873 directed Charles A. Roe, afterwards Chief Judge of the Punjab Chief Court, to resettle the District.<sup>39</sup>

The State laid claim to one-half net assets, i.e. half the produce left after meeting the expenses of cultivation. Roe calculated for each class of land in each assessment circle the average size of the Government share of produce and the cash value of that share. The assessment was based upon these estimates. Acreage rates were devised for the major classes of land: *sailab* land, canal land irrigated by flow, canal land irrigated by lift, well land alone, and well land aided by canal. In some localities wells were charged lump sums.<sup>40</sup> The new demand amounted to Rs. 672,626, an increase of 39.3 per cent over the previous assessment. The *tahsil jamas* were as follows:<sup>41</sup>

Tahsil	Demand	Percentage of increase from last Settlement
Multan	157,991	49
Shujabad	129,010	10



Lodhran	145,126	26
Mailsi	152,765	72
Serai Sidhu	66,809	53

According to Roe, the large increase was warranted because cultivation had expanded by 70,000 acres or 16 per cent since the last Settlement. In addition the proportion of the cultivated area irrigated had grown from 75 per cent to 82 per cent and agricultural prices had risen by 25 per cent.<sup>42</sup>

*Sailab* land was subjected to a fluctuating assessment based upon annual measurements of cultivation.<sup>43</sup> The system for remitting the revenue of canal tracts was overhauled. At the First Regular Settlement, the canal-dependent portion of each village's assessment had been ascertained and declared remissible. As it had been discovered that conditions varied too widely within a given village for uniform remissions to be feasible, the *jama* of each individual holding was divided into canal and non-canal. The canal-dependent revenue totalled Rs. 274,609. The new plan worked little better than the old because the authorities were loath to grant remissions. Remissions averaged only 2000 rupees annually and out of 90,000 holdings eligible for remissions, on an average only 58 per year received relief.<sup>44</sup>

To round off our narrative, it may be mentioned that the Third Regular Settlement (1896-1901) was distinguished by the introduction of fluctuating assessments on all canal and *sailab* lands, which accounted for 75 per cent of the total *jama*. Only well lands remained under fixed assessments. Thus, after nearly half a century the British had returned to Sawan Mal's principles of revenue administration.<sup>45</sup>

#### IV

Side by side with the British revenue system, Sawan Mal's methods flourished until the 1880s in the *bar* of northeastern Multan. This was the accomplishment of two remarkable entrepreneurs, Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani and his son Ghulam Kadir Khan.

In the *bar* of *Tahsil* Mailsi agriculture was confined to scattered hollows and dry stream beds where sufficient run-off

rainfall sometimes accumulated for crops to be raised. These depressions (*dhorehs*) were grouped for revenue purposes into circles (*rahnas*). Rainfall fluctuated so widely from one year to the next that a fixed revenue assessment was impracticable. Accordingly, the best arrangement for Government was to farm out the right to collect the revenue (one-third of agricultural produce) to men of local influence for a fixed annual fee. At the First Regular Settlement the rain-watered (*barani*) lands of Mailsi—some 600,000 acres in extent—were leased to Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani and the headmen of local nomadic tribes, in partial recognition of their services in 1857-58.<sup>46</sup>

Ghulam Mustafa Khan was well suited for the role of revenue middleman: he had been *kardar* of the *bar* zone in Sawan Mal's day and still held lands there. The Pathan's "farm" took in 61 *rahnas*, 49 of which were subject to other claims from four local chieftains. These consisted of: (1) a fee styled *wajah zamindari* of one-half *ser* per *maund* of produce (i.e. one-eightieth) in recognition of overlordship; and (2) a smaller charge politely described as "insurance against cattle-theft."<sup>47</sup>

Even though the revenue lease conferred no right to make permanent improvements, Ghulam Mustafa set to work on an inundation canal from the Sutlej.<sup>48</sup> This "Hajiwah"<sup>49</sup> was eventually completed by Ghulam Kadir Khan after his father's death in 1869. While the work was under construction the Khakwanis had heavy capital outlays with little return. About 1872, however, the enterprise began to show a profit and by 1879 the family reportedly had recovered its initial investment with interest. When completed the Hajiwah was 39 miles long and 30 feet wide, with an average discharge of 500 cubic feet per second during the flood season.<sup>50</sup> There were 18 subsidiary watercourses (*kassis*), 3 of which were not in use in 1879.<sup>51</sup> The canal commanded (i.e. was capable of irrigating) 89,000 acres, 22,000 of which were actually under cultivation in 1879.<sup>52</sup>

The Khakwanis met with notable success in inducing local pastoralists to settle down as cultivators. This achievement was due primarily to their practice of taking a share of the actual crop as rent. Such a self-adjusting system bore lightly on the cultivators in "bust" years while enabling the landlord to share fully in the profits of "boom" years. It had the additional merit of not requiring cash payments from men who—as one official expressively put it—probably had never seen a rupee in



their lives. No other approach would have worked so well with strangers to steady labor and a cash economy.<sup>53</sup>

Friction between the Khakwanis and their neighbors was not unknown. Around 1862 Ghulam Mustafa Khan was involved in a major dispute over his revenue lease with the head of the long-established Dhadi Jat clan, Chakir Khan Wazir. The authorities ruled in favor of the Pathan, who then used his victory as justification for withholding payment of *wajah zamindari* from all local chiefs (this due, though not specifically at issue in the dispute, had been mentioned incidentally by Chakir Khan as one of his rights). At a later date Ghulam Kadir Khan attempted to oust one of his co-sharers in the revenue farm, the formidable Machia Langrial. Furthermore, Ghulam Kadir's bailiffs, until punished by the authorities for this practice, were wont to incarcerate herdsmen in private jails to extort fines for alleged cattle-trespass on the Hajiwah domains.<sup>54</sup> *Imperium in imperio* indeed!

At the time of the Second Regular Settlement, the administration pondered what action to take regarding the Hajiwah, the lands irrigated therefrom, and the fluctuating *barani* cultivation. Strictly speaking, Ghulam Kadir had no legal title to either the canal or the lands dependent on it. Government however had tacitly sanctioned the enterprise by not objecting at any stage and was naturally reluctant to come down hard on the only "improving landlord" family to appear among the Muslim magnates of South-West Punjab.

For settlement purposes the Mailsi *bar* was divided into three blocks:

*Block 1.* Commanded by the Hajiwah (89,000 acres).

*Block 2.* Irrigable by an extension of the canal (33,000 acres).

*Block 3.* Entirely beyond reach of the canal (494,000 acres).

In 1879 Settlement Officer Charles A. Roe advised against a takeover of the Hajiwah and the irrigated zone. A fixed cash assessment such as the administration would impose would in all probability stampede the cultivators back into the pastoral state from which they had so recently emerged. Besides, Ghulam Kadir would demand so large a compensation as to prevent the canal from being a financial success. In Roe's opinion, the Pathan's enterprise should be rewarded by the grant of all of Block 1 in proprietary right. As a further boon, an

*inam* of Rs. 5,000 should be deducted in perpetuity from the revenue demand of Rs. 15,000 per annum to be imposed on the new estate. In addition, Roe favored leasing Block 2 to Ghulam Kadir in farm since he was best able to bring it under cultivation with water from the Hajiwah.<sup>55</sup>

In contrast to the Settlement Officer, Financial Commissioner James B. Lyall desired to place close restrictions on Ghulam Kadir's sphere of action. Ghulam Kadir should not be made all-powerful; even though energetic and able he was "disposed to be high-handed and grasping, and . . . therefore more feared than liked in this country."<sup>56</sup> As modified by Lyall, the proposed settlement arrangements read as follows:

*Block 1.* (a) Only 60,000 acres to be granted to Ghulam Kadir; (b) a condition to be attached to the grant empowering Government to take over the Hajiwah without compensation whenever necessary for its efficient management; (c) the revenue demand to be Rs. 15,000 less a Rs. 5000 *inam* as before, but the *inam* to be for two lifetimes only (Ghulam Kadir's and that of a son or sons to be selected by Government); (d) the revenues of the remaining 29,000 acres to be farmed out to Ghulam Kadir for Rs. 150 yearly, with the express stipulation he could not bring any of this under cultivation from his canal without Government's permission (this restriction also to apply to the farming leases of Blocks 2 and 3).

*Block 2.* Revenue to be farmed to Atta Muhammad Khan (a cousin of Ghulam Kadir's)<sup>57</sup> for Rs. 500 annually.

*Block 3.* To be farmed out in sub-blocks to the headmen of local tribes for a total of Rs. 700 yearly.<sup>58</sup>

The Financial Commissioner's recommendations received the sanction of the Punjab Government (October 1879) and the Government of India (December 1879). C.L. Tupper, Indian Under Secretary of Revenue, minimized the reports of high-handedness on the part of Ghulam Kadir Khan. A measure of forcefulness was necessary in dealing with:

. . . the roving clans of the desert, whose wild lives are still attested by the claim for the euphemistically termed 'cattle protection fee'—in plainer language, blackmail. The best proof of his success, and of his reasonable consideration for those over whom he can exercise power, is that he has induced these men of the waste to settle down. Any



serious oppression would immediately drive them back, with their flocks and herds, to the barren expanse and the bushes.<sup>59</sup>

As a postscript to the Hajiwah story, Ghulam Kadir Khan's four sons fell to quarreling over his estate shortly after his demise in 1888. As these disputes injured irrigation, Government invoked the relevant clause in the grant and took over the canal.<sup>60</sup>

The transformation of the Punjab civil justice system was symptomatic of a growing ossification and compartmentalization in the administration. One suspects this trend was partly responsible for the slowness of the official response to crises such as the communal confrontation to be examined in Chapter Thirteen. The admission of pleaders to Punjab courts in 1866 possessed far-reaching significance. When popular agitations arose—as occurred with increasing frequency from the 1880s onward—an indigenous bar was on hand in District towns such as Multan to assume leadership and to battle with Government officials on the latter's home ground of laws and regulations.

Throughout the period under consideration, the administration clung stubbornly to fixed revenue assessments despite mounting evidence that a fluctuating system was better suited to the Multani ecology. This inflexibility was somewhat mitigated by the authorities' willingness to allow the Khakwanis a free hand in developing a desert region where the governmental revenue system was clearly inapplicable.

## NOTES

1. S.S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 165-70. Ram Lal Handa, *Development of the Judiciary in Punjab 1864-1884*, pp. 43-44, 49. Punjab Government, *The Punjab Courts Act, Act No. XVIII of 1884*, (Lahore, n.d.), iii-iv.
2. Daya Krishna Kapur, *A History of the Development of the Judiciary in the Punjab, 1884-1926* (Lahore, 1928), p. 4.

3. John Becher to Herbert Edwardes, Dera Ismael Khan, 27 February 1862, IOL, European Manuscripts (English) 212/1 Edwardes-Nicholson Collection. See also George Robert Elsmie, *Thirty-Five Years in the Punjab* (Edinburgh, n.d.), pp. 77-78.
4. Remarks by the Judicial Commissioner in, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1862, pp. 3, 5, 10.
5. Officiating Judicial Commissioner to Secretary, Punjab Government, 20 April, 1864, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1863, p. 13.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
7. Handa, *Development of the Judiciary in Punjab, 1864-84*, pp. 28-29, 48-49. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, p. 234. The Chief Court replaced the Judicial Commissioner as the highest provincial appellate court and possessed the power to try European British subjects, who previously had fallen under the jurisdiction of the High Court of Bengal at Calcutta. The Court consisted of a minimum of two judges, one of whom was required to be a barrister of at least five years standing.
8. *Punjab Civil Justice Reports* for 1867 through 1871, *passim*.
9. Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor in the Judicial Department, 26 September 1871, *Punjab Civil Justice Report* for 1870, p. 3.
10. Handa, *Development of the Judiciary in Punjab, 1864-84*, pp. 49-50. *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1876, p. 13.
11. Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor in Home Department, 4 December 1872, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1871, pp. 7-11.
12. *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1862, Table I. Officiating Registrar, Chief Court, to Officiating Secretary, Punjab Government, 25 July 1871, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1870, p. 3. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, Statistical Tables, No. XXXIX. *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1880, p. 2.
13. Table V and Mooltan Division Report, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1862.
14. Mooltan Division Report, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1864, p. 33.
15. *Ibid.*, 1869, pp. 64-65. When Mukhdum Shah Mahmud died in 1869, tens of thousands of Muslims attended his funeral and the courts were closed for the day as a gesture of respect. G.L. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of* Note, II, 377.
16. Mooltan Division Report, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1869, p. 64.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
18. *Ibid.*,
19. *Ibid.*,
20. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
21. *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1870, pp. 67-68.
22. *Ibid.*, for 1867 through 1870, *passim*.
23. *Ibid.*, 1870, p. 24.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-27. See also, *Punjab Civil Justice Report* for 1869, pp. 19-21.
26. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 128. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 241. Morris had previously settled Gujranwala District. For the details of Morris' settlement establishment, see NAI, |GoI Foreign| (Political) Proceedings, Nos. 613-623(C) of 17 April 1857, Nos. 119-125(C) of 19 June 1857, and Nos. 156-162(C) of 10 July 1857.
27. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 128. The Second Summary Settlement's elaborate subdivision of assessment circles according to type of irrigation



and soil was discarded.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-29.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 132.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 136. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 242.
34. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 129, 136. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 242.
35. In 1868, Muzaffargarh had a population of 295,547 compared to 471,563 in Multan. In Muzaffargarh, 568.58 square miles were under cultivation as against 972.79 square miles in Multan. Punjab Government, *Report on the 1868 Punjab Census*, Appendices, pp. 2, 27.
36. *Punjab Revenue Administration Report*, 1859-60, p. 23, Statistical Tables, No. 1, *Punjab Revenue Administration Report*, 1865-66, p. 150, Statement I. Muzaffargarh District *Gazetteer*, 1929, Part A (Lahore, 1931), pp. 240-41.
37. NAI, Gol Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce (Revenue) Proceedings, Nos. 54-56(B) of November 1874.
38. Minute of 7 November 1874, *Ibid.*
39. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 242. Roe had entered the Punjab Civil Service as an Assistant Commissioner in 1864. He had done settlement work in Montgomery and Hoshiarpur Districts. Punjab Government, *History of Services of Gazetted Officers Employed in the Punjab*, Corrected up to 1 July, 1888 (Lahore, 1888), p. 40.
40. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 130-31.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-32.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-31, 133.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-36.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.
45. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, pp. 244-47.
46. J.H. Morris, *Report on the Revised Settlement of Mooltan District* (Lahore, 1860), p. 16. Memorandum by Charles A. Roe, Settlement Officer Multan, 5 June 1879; Recommendations by J.B. Lyall, Financial Commissioner Punjab, for assessment of the *bar barani* lands of Mailsi: NAI, Gol, Home, Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue) Procds., No. 108 (A) of December 1879.
47. Memo by Settlement Officer Roe, 5 June 1879, NAI, Gol, Home, Rev. & Ag. (Rev.), No. 108 (A) of Dec. 1879.
48. It will be recalled that Ghulam Mustafa was no novice in irrigation matters, having been a renowned canal builder under Sawan Mal.
49. The Hajiwah was named in honor of Ghulam Mustafa, who had performed the Haj to Mecca.
50. The mouth of the Hajiwah was situated at a short distance inside Montgomery District.
51. Ghulam Kadir Khan owned seven *kassisi* entirely and held shares in five others.
52. Roe Memorandum, Lyall's Recommendations, NAI, Gol, Home, Rev. & Ag. (Rev.), No. 108 (A) of December 1879. Khan Bahadur Pir Muhammad Ibrahim, Book describing the Pakistan-India dispute over the water of the Punjab rivers (title and facts of publication missing), pp. 42-43.

53. R. O'Brien, Executive Engineer Lower Sutlej and Chenab Irrigation Canals, to Superintending Engineer Upper Bari Doab Circle, 20 June 1876, Gol. Home, Rev. & Ag. (Rev.), No. 108(A) of December 1879.
54. Roe Memorandum, Lyall's Recommendations, *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. According to the Financial Commissioner, Ghulam Kadir had tricked his cousin and brother-in-law, Abdul Rahman Khan, out of a one-third share in the Hajiwah.
57. Roe had suggested Atta Muhammad Khan as an alternative if Ghulam Kadir was unacceptable.
58. Lyall's Recommendations, NAI, Gol. Home, Rev. & Ag. (Rev.), No. 108(A) of Dec. 1879. In keeping with the administration's concern to retain the support of traditional leaders, Lyall specified that the leases were not to be auctioned off to the highest bidders: "... it is very important to have the leading men of the tract on our side; moreover they can collect the rent without difficulty, and may be trusted not to make themselves too obnoxious to the cultivators."
59. Minute by C.L. Tupper, 19 Nov. 1879, NAI, Gol. Home, Rev. & Ag. (Rev.), No. 109(A) of Dec. 1879.
60. G.L. Chopra, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 381-82. Pir Muhammad Ibrahim, Pakistan-India water dispute, p. 43.



## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Economic Growth and Social Dislocation: 1858-1885

"... any legislation designed to protect one class to the exclusion of others, will react upon the very persons whom it is intended to favor, by raising the interest on loans raised for improving the land; by destroying their self-reliance; and by removing the incentives to self-denial and industry; lessons which are gradually being learnt, and by means of which alone the agriculturists of India will keep pace with their fellow subjects in success and prosperity."—*Punjab Revenue Administration Report, 1873-74* (Lahore, 1874), p. 66.

"... considerable as is the scale on which this teaching of men by their own ruin appears to go on, it cannot be said to be successful."—J.G. Cordery, Deputy Commissioner Gujranwala, in *Extracts from District and Divisional Reports, Punjab Civil Justice Administration Report, 1871* (Lahore, 1872), vii-viii.

During the generation after the Mutiny, an extensive export-import trade grew up between Punjab and the outside world via the port of Karachi. Owing to a favorable location on the Lahore-Karachi railway, Multan City became a major focus of this commerce. Economic development gave rise to severe social dislocation in Punjab. The commercial castes were better equipped by background and temperament than the agricultural castes to exploit economic opportunities and other changes associated with imperial rule. The consequences were an epidemic of agrarian indebtedness and a concomitant large-scale transfer of agricultural land to moneylenders. In Multan the economic and social position of large landholders was seriously eroded, sapping their ability to fulfil their assigned political role as bulwarks of the regime.

## I

Shortly after Annexation the the provincial administration recognized that the agricultural commodities of landlocked Punjab could most conveniently be exported through Karachi, though some uncertainty existed as to whether river steamers or railways were the best form of inland transport. The question was ultimately decided in favor of the railway.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1850s and 60s, efforts were made to develop steam navigation on the Indus and its tributaries. Some officials had visions of capturing the trade of Afghanistan and Central Asia by means of steamer service on the Indus.<sup>2</sup> Vessels of the Bombay Government Steam Flotilla called regularly at Multan on the Chenab, and during the flood season occasionally ascended as far as Kalabagh on the Indus, Jhelum on the Jhelum, Lahore on the Ravi, and Ferozepur on the Sutlej.<sup>3</sup> The Flotilla was not a dependable commercial carrier. In the frequent spells of low water the steamers' carrying capacity was extremely limited and troops and Government stores took precedence over private cargo. In 1857 Commissioner G.W. Hamilton of Multan reported that goods had been detained for months at Karachi and eventually had to be forwarded to Punjab on camels.<sup>4</sup> The Bombay Indus Flotilla was disbanded in 1862, five steamers being turned over to the Sind, Punjab and Delhi Railway Company which was constructing a line from Karachi to Multan City. Until the completion of the line, the company's vessels plied between the railhead and Multan.<sup>5</sup>

In 1862, the Punjab Government Marine Department was formed to conduct steam navigation on Upper Indus. Government intended to prove that steamers could be operated profitably, then retire in favor of private enterprise. The experiment was not a success due to an inability to procure vessels with the requisite combination of light draft and powerful engines.<sup>6</sup> The five Marine Department steamers were unable to attract sufficient cargo to meet expenses because they charged substantially higher freight rates than the local "country boats." These flat-bottomed, wooden craft (which floated downstream with the current and were towed upstream by teams of men on the banks) cost much less to build and operate than steamers. Expectations that steam navigation would divert the commerce of Central Asia to Karachi were unfulfilled. Afghan caravan merchants (*powindahs*) persisted in going



overland via Multan to Lahore and Amritsar. After running up a deficit of Rs. 1,400,000 the Punjab Flotilla was abolished in 1872.<sup>7</sup>

The Sind, Punjab, and Delhi Railway company was established in 1855. The first section, 105 miles long, between Karachi and Kotri was finished in 1861 and the following year an Amritsar-Lahore segment was opened.<sup>8</sup> The line from Lahore to Multan City was completed in 1865 and the Delhi-Amritsar link in 1870. Construction of the Indus Valley State Railway from Kotri to Multan City was finished in 1878. The line followed the west bank of the Indus as far as Sukkur, then shifted to the other side. Cars were ferried across the river until completion of a bridge in 1889.<sup>9</sup>

## II

Multan was one of those fortunate South Asian cities which was able to retain its pre-colonial economic importance by a re-direction of energies.<sup>10</sup> Although the Central Asian caravan trade—Multan's traditional *raison d'être*—declined in importance following Annexation, the town shared in the profits of the new overseas commerce by being a railhead at a point where the river routes of Punjab radiated like the ribs of a fan.

In 1860, Commissioner Hamilton of Multan reported that trade was improving as a result of increased steam traffic on the Indus and that agricultural prices were high and likely to remain so.<sup>11</sup> Commissioner William Ford stated in 1863 that the trade of Multan City was growing and that the town had become much wealthier since he left there ten years previously. During fiscal 1862-63, Multan City exported Rs. 4,201,050 in cotton, 24,007 bales being shipped by steamer to Karachi. In 1862-63 the city also exported Rs. 901,810 in goods down the Indus in 299 country boats. In value the country boat trade of Multan was second only to that of Ferozepur, which exported Rs. 4,093,470 in goods.<sup>12</sup> In 1865-66 Multan City exported approximately Rs. 300,000 worth of cloth to Jhang District and Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup>

After completion of the railway to Karachi, Multan City became one of the chief mercantile centers of Punjab. The town funneled exports to Karachi and distributed imports from that port throughout the province. The main exports were cotton, wheat, wool, oilseeds, sugar, and indigo; the main imports were European cotton textiles and other European manufac-

tures. Multan also imported fruits, drugs, raw silk, and spices from Afghanistan, while exporting to that country indigo, European and Indian cotton fabrics, sugar, and shoes. Multani merchants had agents in every major Punjab city and the large firms of Lahore, Amritsar, Peshawar, Jullundur, and Delhi maintained representatives at Multan.<sup>14</sup>

In fiscal 1880-81, the trade of Multan city was the third largest in value in the province, after Amritsar and Delhi but ahead of Lahore.<sup>15</sup>

City	Value of Imports (Rs.)	Value of Exports (Rs.)	Total Value (Rs.)
Amritsar	31,534,287	13,030,985	44,565,272
Delhi	22,072,933	9,874,125	31,947,118
Multan	8,404,104	3,703,382	12,107,486
Lahore	7,333,518	1,202,717	8,536,035

Some of the principal imports and exports of Multan in 1880-81 are given below:<sup>16</sup>

Commodity	Imports (tons)	Exports (tons)
Raw cotton	714	562
European cotton yarn	85	2
European piece-goods	867	520
Indigo	490	379
Wheat	10,223	541
Seeds of all sorts	3,757	626
Raw silk	49	17
Refined sugar	2,206	825
Unrefined sugar	2,384	1,325

In his report on Multan City trade in 1880-81, the District Deputy Commissioner stated that the weavers of the city preferred European to Indian yarn. There was a brisk demand for Multani textiles across the Afghan border. The substantial increase in European piece-good imports from 664 tons in



1879-80 was due to the opening of several new shops and big purchases by *punjabi* merchants. One-half the European piece-goods exports went to the North-West Frontier and Afghanistan; the other half to neighboring districts and Bahawalpur. Imports of raw silk from Bombay, Kanton, and Heral had resumed in 1880-81 after an interruption of two years. Four-fifths of the silk imports came from these places and the rest from China. Silk was re-exported mainly to Jhang, Bahawalpur, and Sind.<sup>17</sup>

In 1882-83 Multan City ranked fourth in the value of its trade, behind Delhi, Amritsar, and Lahore.<sup>18</sup>

City	Imports (Rs.)	Exports (Rs.)	Total (Rs.)
Delhi	43,422,514	26,656,686	70,079,200
Amritsar	27,725,133	9,515,038	37,240,171
Lahore	10,867,704	6,830,110	17,697,814
Multan	7,466,149	2,950,772	10,416,921

According to the *Punjab Internal Trade and Manufactures Report* for 1882-83, the commercial future of Multan was uncertain. On one hand, the opening of a railway to Sibi in Baluchistan might attract the Afghan trade away from Multan; on the other hand, the city should benefit from the growth of rail traffic with Karachi. As trade with Sind appeared to be avoiding Multan in order to escape paying town duties (*octroi*), the Municipal Committee was advised to consider a reduction in duties.<sup>19</sup> The *Internal Trade Report* for 1883-84 remarked that Multani *octroi* rates were in fact not excessive. Trade was skirting the city because goods could be shipped directly to their destinations from rural railway stations.<sup>20</sup>

Between 1883 and 1885, Punjabi rail-borne commerce with Karachi expanded enormously.

#### IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADE WITH SIND<sup>21</sup>

(Including Karachi, 1883-84)

imports in per cent of total value of imports	exports in per cent of total value of exports
15%	30%

IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADE WITH  
KARACHI, 1884-85imports in per cent of  
total value  
35%exports in per cent of  
total value  
40%

Multan City shared in the growth of trade with Karachi. The city's imports of European piece-goods increased from 654 tons in 1883-84 to 2662 tons in 1884-85. During the same period, exports by rail of wheat increased from 1147 tons to 5655 tons. The *Internal Trade Report for 1884-85* concluded that previous fears of trade deserting Multan had proven groundless.<sup>22</sup>

## III

Despite wide variations in skill and industry, all the agricultural castes and tribes of Punjab were prone to fall into debt. As a cash economy did not obtain in rural areas, landholders were obliged to borrow from village moneylenders in order to pay the revenue, purchase bullocks and agricultural implements, sink wells, and marry off their daughters in the lavish style dictated by custom.<sup>23</sup>

Even though agrarian indebtedness was endemic in pre-Annexation Punjab,<sup>24</sup> innovations associated with imperial rule caused it to assume epidemic proportions. Rigid cash assessments substantially increased the need to borrow. At the same time, borrowing became much easier. When rights in land had been vested in the village community or tribe, an individual had not been permitted to alienate his share without the consent of the group. Cash had to be borrowed on the security of cattle, crops, or the family jewels. The introduction of individual private property in land after 1849 greatly expanded the credit of agriculturists by making it possible to borrow on the security of land.<sup>25</sup>

Two factors stimulated lending by the moneyed classes. In the first instance merchants and bankers had more money to lend because of the economic expansion of the post-Mutiny period. In the second instance the British civil court system provided an effective means of recovering loans. A creditor



could sue a debtor and obtain a judgment. Should the debtor be unable or unwilling to pay, the court would execute the decree, *i.e.* force the judgment debtor to pay. Although court-ordered sales of land to satisfy debts were uncommon in Punjab, other forms of coercion were employed such as attachment of crops and other movable property and imprisonment of defaulters.<sup>26</sup>

Interest rates were extremely high (2.5 per cent per month or 30 per cent per year being the norm in Hoshiarpur District) but no higher than in pre-Annexation times. One official candidly acknowledged that: "The real secret of the pressure of our Civil Courts upon the agricultural classes is that we have legitimized usurious rates of interest fixed in the days when might was right and when the creditor could not secure the aid of a Civil Court to assist in the recovery of his dues."<sup>27</sup>

During the flexible period of judicial administration, judges were inclined to deal leniently with debtors. In 1862 Commissioner W. Ford of Multan complained that civil courts displayed more sympathy for debtors than for creditors, letting the former off easily without regard for whether or not their difficulties were their own fault. Debtors were allowed to pay by instalments despite the fact that they possessed property which could be attached. Even where property did not exist, imprisonment of the defaulter would often induce his friends to pay.<sup>28</sup> The establishment of a Regulation Province judicial system in the mid-1860s led to a narrowly legalistic view of debt cases with the result that suits for debt by moneylenders against agriculturists increased by leaps and bounds.<sup>29</sup>

Year	Suits by bankers and shopkeepers against agriculturists	Total civil suits
1865	41,173 (30% of total)	139,495
1875	90,839 (39% of total)	230,607
1880	108,116 (42% of total)	256,015

The growth of agrarian indebtedness was accompanied by an increase in land transfers to moneylenders. Alienation of the land of hereditary agriculturists was discouraged during

the 1850s in the interests of social and political stability, but these restrictions, which ran counter to British *laissez-faire* economic doctrines, were relaxed during the 1860s.<sup>30</sup> Moderate revenue assessments and the high agricultural prices resulting from large-scale exports of agricultural commodities encouraged capitalists to invest in land by outright purchase and by acquiring mortgages. Detailed records of rights in land compiled in the course of settlement operations facilitated transfers by endowing agriculturists with clear titles to their holdings.<sup>31</sup>

#### IV

In Multan, as elsewhere in Punjab, agricultural debt and land alienation to moneyed interests had assumed alarming proportions by the mid-1880s. This process undermined the position of the big landholders upon whom Government relied for political support.

A variety of factors promoted agrarian indebtedness in Multan. Most Muslim landholders kept accounts with *banias* and approximately half withdrew more in a year than they deposited.<sup>32</sup> Moneylenders employed a number of devices to weigh the scales in their favor. One involved making advances on condition of being repaid in grain at a prearranged price. For instance, a cultivator would borrow cash in December to pay the *kharif* revenue, promising to repay in June at the rate of one *path* (2048 to 3000 pounds) of wheat per Rs. 32. In June the market price of wheat would be Rs. 55 per *path*, giving the lender a profit of 72 per cent. Another practice consisted of deducting 1/16th or 1/32nd from the face value of a loan; for example, a *bania* would enter a loan in his account book as Rs. 100 and charge interest on that sum, but only pay out Rs. 93.75 annas.<sup>33</sup>

In his *Multan Settlement Report* (1880) Charles Roe singled out indolence and improvidence as the principal causes of indebtedness:

The bulk of the smaller *zamindars* are ignorant and careless farmers, destitute of energy, drifting along without a thought for the morrow, and not attempting to look into their accounts so long as the money-lender will give them an advance. . . . Most of the leading Afghans are, like many of the leading Jats, energetic and intelligent, but they suffer



from the same vice of extravagance. Men who should be walking think they must keep their horse; those who could properly afford one or two horses, think they must keep five or six; men who would be men of substance and position, if they would only look after their property themselves, think it adds to their dignity to transact all their business through a *mukhtar* or agent.<sup>34</sup>

The Punjab Settlement Commissioner, Colonel Wace, strongly dissented from Roe's verdict:

... the people were never trained for the position in which they are placed by our Government, and were never fit for such a position. Under former Governments they were kept as regards agriculture in a state of tutelage.... The Government *kardars* did everything for them, made them cultivate the land, made the Hindus lend them money for seed, and made the borrowers repay.... After Annexation this minute superintendence was withdrawn.... The agriculturists, who had for generations been accustomed to have every part of their economic details done for them by Government, were as helpless as a child which can hardly walk when deprived of the chair on which it leaned, and the money-lender stepped into the place which the former Governments occupied.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the standard collateral and usufructary mortgages,<sup>36</sup> a type of oral mortgage called *lekha mukhi* was common in Multan. A debtor made over the proprietor's share of the produce to his creditor, who paid the land revenue. The creditor, after deducting the revenue and interest on the loan (usually 12 per cent) from the proprietary share, credited the balance, if any, towards repayment of the principal. A *lekha mukhi* mortgage by itself was less binding legally than a written one, but had the force of a written mortgage when backed by a registered deed and a mutation of names in a village Record of Rights (as was common by the 1880s).<sup>37</sup> Another frequent type of arrangement may be classified as a variety of mortgage: a landholder fearful of meeting a cash assessment would make over the state's share of produce (*mahsul*) to a moneylender who paid the revenue, keeping any surplus and making good any shortfall.

In 1858-59, 67 voluntary land sales and 37 land mortgages

occurred in Multan District; 86 sales and 36 mortgages were reported in 1859-60.<sup>38</sup> The sales and mortgages for the period 1865 through 1869 and the period 1869 through 1874 are shown in the following table.<sup>39</sup>

Period	Sales		Mortgages	
	Cases	Area	Cases	Area
1865-69	613	29,009 acres	362	35,018 acres
1869-74	1069	37,021 "	704	47,435 "

From 1874 onwards the statistics distinguished between alienations to agriculturists and those to moneylenders, the totals for the five years 1874-1879 being as follows:<sup>40</sup>

	Sales		Mortgages	
	Cases	Area	Cases	Area
To agriculturists	1223	34,607 acres	892	39,695 acres
To moneylenders	605	18,603 "	773	23,808 "

Between the First and Second Regular Settlements, 95,251 acres or 5.3 per cent of the total agricultural land was sold and the area under regular mortgages increased from 1.7 per cent to 2.4 per cent (45,370 acres). In addition, 7.2 per cent of the area (135,306 acres) was under *lekha mukhi* mortgages by the Second Regular Settlement.<sup>41</sup> The *tahsil* statistics of sales and mortgages are given below.<sup>42</sup>

Tahsil	Area (acres)	Jama (Rs.)	Area %	Jama %
Multan				
Sales	23,458	9072	7.0	8.4
Mortgages	37,647	15,516	9.5	13.2
Shujabad				
Sales	15,101	13,663	7.7	10.2
Mortgages	12,441	16,609	6.6	18.6
Lodhran				
Sales	21,800	7297	5.0	6.0



Mortgages	24,641	7919	5.6	7.0
Mailsi				
Sales	30,427	6009	5.0	5.8
Mortgages	97,336	20,245	16.0	18.7
Serai Sidhu				
Sales	4465	Not given	1.8	Not given
Mortgages	8611	3166	3.7	4.4

Shujabad and Multan led in the percentage of area sold and in the revenue assessment of the land sold because these *tahsils* were the most economically-advanced in the District. It is not certain why so much land was mortgaged in Mailsi but enhancement of land values by the Khakwanis' irrigation project was doubtless a factor.

The proportion of the proprietary area held by Hindu capitalists expanded from 17 per cent to 20.3 per cent between the First and Second Regular Settlements.<sup>43</sup> Multani Hindus ran their estates efficiently and sunk capital in agricultural improvements, in marked contrast to eastern Punjab moneylenders who acquired land. Unlike the commercial castes of the rest of the province, Multani Aroras had gained control of considerable land prior to Annexation by taking advantage of Sawan Mal's policy of granting waste on favorable terms to those prepared to bring it under cultivation. Therefore, Multani moneylenders were more familiar than moneylenders elsewhere with agricultural management and the wisdom of investing in improvements.<sup>44</sup>

During the first half of the 1880s, sales and mortgages increased at a faster pace:<sup>45</sup>

Year	Sales		Mortgages	
	Cases (nos.)	Area (acres)	Cases (nos.)	Area (acres)
1879-80				
Agriculturists	412	7691	322	11,553
Moneylenders	145	3792	242	7099
1880-81				
Agriculturists	272	6628	286	16,812
Moneylenders	62	1849	165	4611
1881-82				

Agriculturists	304	8995	236	6711
Moneylenders	135	5116	249	9856
1882-83				
Agriculturists	816	18,073	459	10,849
Moneylenders	159	3857	270	6356
1883-84				
Agriculturists	992	16,163	650	17,495
Moneylenders	134	4569	540	21,303
Total of five years				
Agriculturists	2796	57,550	1953	63,420
Moneylenders	635	19,183	1466	49,225

The large increases in the numbers of sales and mortgages were due in part to the enhancement in the land values caused by the growth in exports of agricultural produce to Karachi.

By 1885, 151,593 acres constituting 20.9 per cent of the cultivated area of Multan had been mortgaged to moneylenders. By 1886, 51,847 acres constituting 7.5 per cent of the cultivated area had been sold to moneylenders.<sup>46</sup>

Mortgages held by moneylenders were much harder to redeem than those held by agriculturists.<sup>47</sup>

Statement of areas mortgaged and redeemed from mortgage, 1879-90 through 1883-84

	To moneylenders	To agriculturists
Mortgaged	49,225 acres	63,420 acres
Redeemed	3,897 " (8%)	19,316 " (30%)
Unredeemed	45,328 " (92%)	44,104 " (70%)

Once moneylenders secured a hold on an estate, they piled loan on loan and interest on interest until the mortgagor was hopelessly involved.<sup>48</sup>

Out of their mounting burden of indebtedness, the agricultural classes coined a proverb: "An account-book worth two pice has power over thousands."<sup>49</sup> The *banias* had a maxim of their own: "A Jat, like a wound, is better when tied."<sup>50</sup>

Agrarian indebtedness was especially dangerous in Districts



such as Multan where the traditional landholding groups were overwhelmingly Muslim and the controllers of capital predominantly Hindu.<sup>51</sup> Muslim economic grievances might combine with religious animosity to generate communal disorders. A possibility also existed that Muslims would grow disaffected towards a regime whose legal system permitted Hindus to exploit them.<sup>52</sup>

The Muslim magnates of Multan—upon whom the authorities had depended to control their community since the Mutiny—suffered heavily from indebtedness and attendant loss of land. Their ability to assist the administration in time of need was correspondingly weakened.<sup>53</sup> Sadiq Muhammad Khan Badozai was heavily in debt at the time of his death in 1873. The responsibility for liquidating the obligation fell upon his son Ashiq Muhammad Khan, who was forced to resign a post as *naib-tahsildar* in order to attend to family business.<sup>54</sup> In 1885 Hamid Shah Gardezi, a member of one of the leading Multani families, mortgaged 16,516 acres for Rs. 250,000 to Rai Mela Ram, a wealthy Public Works contractor of Lahore. The Deputy Commissioner predicted, correctly as it proved, that the mortgage would never be redeemed.<sup>55</sup>

## V

The financial difficulties of large land controllers in Multan formed part of a widespread phenomenon. In 1884 the District Judge of Hazara described the *jagirdars* of his District as hopelessly in debt. Having been accustomed to collecting in kind, they could not adjust to fixed money payments. Although obliged to purchase grain from merchants, the *jagirdars* clung to their extravagant life-style and consequently fell deeper into debt each year. "They will finally become useless for the purposes for which they draw their revenues, alienated from the people, and idle and discontented."<sup>56</sup> Unable to pass the qualifying examinations for government employment and unwilling to enter the army as privates, the chiefs sat at home, dreamt of the good old days, and accumulated more debts from maintaining "good-for-nothing dependents."<sup>57</sup>

In Multan and Hazara the financial problems of major land controllers stemmed in large part from habits which officials

stigmatized as extravagant. It must be pointed out that Europeans and Indians had different perceptions of land and therefore of what constituted efficient land management. Englishmen regarded land as an economic resource to be managed in such a way as to yield maximum profits. Indians conceived of land as a political resource to be utilized to maintain both the maximum number of armed retainers, the basis of local political power, and the pomp and circumstance which their society expected from wielders of power.<sup>58</sup>

As ostentation and the upkeep of retainers had been sound political tactics before British rule, traditional leaders found great difficulty in adapting to altered circumstances. In 1874, Major-General Revnell Taylor supported requests by two Multani Pathan *nawabs*, Faujdar Khan Alizai and Ghulam Hassan Khan Alizai, for increases in their emoluments. He stressed that both chiefs had been local politicians since Sikh times and still kept abreast of events on both sides of the border. Therefore, they were "rather beset with visitors of all kinds. Each Tumandar or Khan of an influential family, members of border jirgas [tribal assemblies], Powindah Mullicks, and others on visiting the chief city of the tract [Dera Ismael Khan] naturally thinks it fitting and pleasant to pay their respects to the Nawab and give him the news and sketch of the politics of his or their own particular part of the country, tribe or Kirri [powindah encampment]."<sup>59</sup> In Taylor's view, the chiefs' heavy outlays on entertainment were not personal extravagances but investments which yielded a valuable return in political intelligence.<sup>60</sup>

## VI

During the period under consideration, the administration, far from being perturbed by the rapid growth of agricultural debt and land alienation, regarded the trend as an example of survival of the fittest.<sup>61</sup> In 1871 the Commissioner of Multan, Major A.A. Munro, reported that voluntary land sales were increasing in all districts of his Division. Transfers by mortgage were increasing rapidly everywhere save in Muzaffargarh, "where the landowners do not appear so much as elsewhere within the grasp of the money-lender, who generally succeeds in securing a permanent hold of the land for himself and heirs and thus



in most parts of the country the ancient holders of the land are gradually giving place to men of a different class, of better business habits, and more impressed with the value of a landed possession than those to whom it descended by inheritance."<sup>62</sup>

In 1874 Lieutenant-Governor R.H. Davies interpreted the increase in sales and mortgages as a sign of remarkable prosperity and a very moderate revenue demand. He did express some concern over the fact that a few landholders of consequence, particularly in Multan Division, had become hopelessly indebted and alienated their estates for an indefinite period. Special courts with insolvency jurisdiction should be set up to help such men: "They may have been improvident, but in the eyes of the great majority of the people improvidence is no excuse for deprivation of ancestral lands; and our failure to protect the proprietary classes from the usurer is a cause for grave dissatisfaction."<sup>63</sup>

The Punjab Financial Commissioner declared in 1875 that debt was confined to a small improvident minority that had adopted extravagant habits upon being endowed with valuable property in land. Some discontent was inevitable but the process set in motion could not be halted by legislation: "The result of British rule has been, and ever will be, to throw people more on their own resources and make them feel responsible for their own actions."<sup>64</sup> In a reversal of his position of the previous year, the Lieutenant-Governor agreed with the Financial Commissioner that no legislation was needed.<sup>65</sup>

Substantial economic progress occurred in Multan District during the generation following the 1857 Revolt. The commercial classes were in the best position to take advantage of economic expansion and such novelties as civil courts and individual private property in land. In consequence, agrarian debt and land alienation to controllers of capital swelled at an ever increasing rate. The economic and social position of many prominent landed families deteriorated, seriously impairing

their ability—and possibly their inclination—to shore up the Imperial Government.

In 1888 the Punjab Government bestirred itself to canvass a number of District Officers as to whether alienations were increasing and, if so, whether any political danger was involved.<sup>66</sup> Major Hutchinson, Deputy Commissioner of Multan, responded:

... mortgages of land by zamindars in Mooltan District to moneylenders are proceeding at an increased rate, and ... in this way many old Muhammadan families are gradually losing all their land. I am not at all convinced that the result involves any political danger. It is true that the Muhammadans are the old fighting races, but there is on the contrary no doubt whatever that the Hindus improve the land. They are better landlords and they sink their profits in the land. Improvements are effected by them which Muhammadans as a rule would never undertake. The value of land is thus raised and crops rendered more secure.<sup>67</sup>

This reply entirely sidestepped the question of whether dispossession of the "old fighting races" was free of political risk. Major Hutchinson voiced the official consensus of the day that the administration could afford to dispense with the services of traditional intermediaries.<sup>68</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Faqir Chand Arora, *Commerce by River in the Punjab or a Survey of the Activities of the Marine Department of the Government of the Punjab, 1861-62 to 1871-72* (Lahore, 1930), quote at beginning of book.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85. Projects for diverting the Afghan trade down the Indus dated back to the 1830s. See Alexander Burnes, *Cabool: A Personal Narrative of a Journey to, and Residence in That City, in the years 1836, 1837, and 1838* (Lahore: West Pakistan Government Reprint, 1961). Appendices I and II, 217-91.
3. Arora, *Commerce by River in Punjab*, pp. 17-18, 24-25.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-30.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-23, 37-39, 45-48.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18, 57-67. A hopeful development occurred in 1868-69 when eight *powindahs* on pilgrimage to Mecca took a steamer to Karachi and one of them returned by steamer with several bales of cotton. This was however only an isolated incident.
8. "The North Western Railway," G.C. Chatterji (ed.), *The Punjab Past and Present: A Souvenir of the Twenty-sixth Meeting of the Indian Science Congress Association, Held at Lahore, January, 1939* (Lahore, 1938), p. 213. Kotri, a



town in Lower Sind, stood on the west bank of the Indus across from Hyderabad, one-time capital of the *Amirs* of Sind.

9. The North Western Railway, p. 213 and maps on p. *Mooltan Gazetteer* 1883-84, pp. 115, 154.
10. Another such city was Ahmedabad in Gujarat. Examples of cities which 'ailed to make the transition were Dacca, Murshidabad, and Surat. See, Kenneth L. Gillion, *Ahmedabad: A Study in Indian Urban History* (Barkeley, 1968), pp. 1-6.
11. *Punjab Revenue Administration Report*, 1859-60, p. 86.
12. *Ibid.*, 1862-63, pp. 85-86 and Appendix IV.
13. *Ibid.*, 1865-66, p. 42. Between fiscal years 1869-70 and 1870-71, the value of Multan City's commerce, exclusive of railway traffic, rose by nearly Rs. 8,000,000. In 1870-71 Multan, with Rs. 22,101,447 in imports and exports, had the largest non-railway trade in value of any Punjab city. Delhi was second with Rs. 16,498,403 worth and Amritsar third with Rs. 10,605,279 worth. (*Punjab Revenue Administration Report*, 1870-71, pp. 51-52). The great expansion in Multani commerce was only temporary. In 1876-77, the city's trade was worth Rs. 10,121,959 (*Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 155).
14. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 154-55.
15. Punjab Government, *Report on the Internal Trade and Manufactures of the Punjab*, 1880-81 (Lahore, 1882), pp. 12-17.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
18. *Punjab Internal Trade and Manufactures Report*, 1882-83, pp. 22, 24, 26, 28, 29.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
20. *Ibid.*, 1883-84, p. 29.
21. *Ibid.*, 1883-84, and 1884-85, *passim*.
22. *Ibid.*, 1884-85, pp. 16-17.
23. Douie, *Punjab Land Administration Manual*, p. 202. S. S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, p. 173.
24. In 1832 a visitor to Ferozepur, a petty Sikh principality on the left bank of the Sutlej, reported: "The Hindu merchants, from the command which they have of money, exercise a preponderating influence.... The ryots, from their extreme poverty, are forced to mortgage their crops to provide themselves with seed and the necessary implements of husbandry. Money is advanced at an enormous rate of interest, the lowest in the most favorable seasons being half an anna per month for every rupee; but the necessities of the people are such, they are now frequently obliged to pay 1½ annas per month, and compound interest is charged after three months. The cattle and even the ploughs ... are the property of the merchants." (Lieutenant F. Mackeson, "Journal of a Voyage from Lodiana to Mithankot by the Satlaj River," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (March, 1837), VI, 183.
25. Charles A. Roe and H.A.B. Rattigan, *Tribal Law in the Punjab so far as it relates to Right in Ancestral Land* (Lahore, 1895), pp. 6-13, 20-22, 26, 68, 83. S. S. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 229-30. Douie, *Punjab Land Administration Manual*, pp. 4-5, 202. H. Calvert, *The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab* (2nd ed.; Lahore, 1936), pp. 242-48, 257-58.
26. Calvert, *Wealth and Welfare of Punjab*, p. 248. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and*

- War, pp. 233-39. *Punjab Civil Justice Reports*, 1864, 1865, 1867-1871, *passim*.
27. Report of Commissioner Douglas Forsyth of Jullundur, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1868, p. 21. Report of Major E. Paske, Officiating Commissioner of Jullundur, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1871, ii. The quotation is from Major Paske.
  28. Multan Division Report, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1862.
  29. *Punjab Civil Justice Reports*, 1865, 1875, 1880, *passim*. According to available statistics, suits by bankers and shopkeepers against agriculturists comprised a very low proportion of civil suits in Multan District. Of 3907 civil suits in 1873, 3373 were for money due and only 477 of those for money due were brought by moneylenders and shopkeepers against agriculturists. *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1873, pp. 6-9, 32. In 1884 suits by moneylenders against agriculturists comprised 6 per cent of all civil suits in Multan, 22 per cent in Jhang, 60 per cent in Montgomery, and 39 per cent in Punjab as a whole. The figures for Multan, however, may have been too low. In the opinion of Lieutenant-Governor Charles Aitchison, the statistics from Multan, Jhang, and Montgomery contained an error because percentages could not vary so widely in three adjoining [districts.] He suggested that many moneylenders who held land were being classified as agriculturists. Remarks by the Lieutenant-Governor, 10 July 1885, *Punjab Civil Justice Report*, 1884.
  30. Douie, *Punjab Land Administration Manual*, pp. 4-7, 11-12, 17, 200. Robert Cust, *Manual for the Guidance of Revenue Officers in Punjab*, pp. 28-31.
  31. Douie, *Punjab Land Administration Manual*, p. 4. Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War*, pp. 234-35. R.N. Cust, *Manual for Revenue Officers in Punjab*, pp. 68-70, 82.
  32. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, p. 189.
  33. E. O'Brien, *Glossary of the Multani Language Compared with Punjabi and Sindhi* (Lahore, 1881), pp. 229-30, 34, 100.
  34. Quoted in *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 85.
  35. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 86.
  36. In a collateral mortgage land was used as security and only forfeited if the loan was not repaid. In a usufructuary mortgage land was temporarily alienated in exchange for a loan, the transfer becoming permanent if the loan were not repaid.
  37. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 73-74. E. O'Brien, *Multani Language*, pp. 221-22.
  38. *Punjab Revenue Administration Report*, 1859-60, Table XXIA.
  39. NAI, *Gol Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue) Proceedings*, No. 1(A) of May 1891.
  40. *Ibid.*,
  41. *Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 85-87.
  42. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.
  43. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1901-02, p. 190. Between the First and Second Regular Settlements, Aroras and Khatri purchased 6339 acres with a *jama* of Rs. 2,125 in *Tahsil Multan* and 2487 acres with a *jama* of Rs. 1876 in *Tahsil Shujabad*. Figures for the other *tahsils* are not available. (*Mooltan Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p. 86).
  44. P.H.M. Van den Dungen, "Changes in Status and Occupation in Nineteenth Century Punjab," D. A. Low (ed.), *Soundings in Modern South*



- Asian History* (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 80-83.
45. NAI, Gol Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue) Proceedings, 1(A) of May 1891.
  46. *Ibid.*
  47. *Ibid.*
  48. H. Calvert, *Wealth and Welfare of Punjab*, p. 251.
  49. E. O'Brien, *Multani Glossary*, p. 23.
  50. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
  51. This split between an agricultural Muslim majority and a commercial Hindu minority was characteristic of all of western and southwestern Punjab (Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Multan and Derajat Divisions).
  52. H.C. Fanshawe, Officiating Junior Secretary, Punjab Government, to Sir E.C. Buck, Secretary, Gol Revenue and Agriculture Department, 7 November 1888, NAI, Gol Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue) Proceedings, 1(A) of May 1891.
  53. The economic difficulties of the large zamindars of Multan had serious political ramifications because this class was more numerous in Multan Division than anywhere else in Punjab. Under the Indian Income-tax Acts of 1869, persons with an annual income in excess of Rs. 500 paid income tax. Out of the 4851 Punjabi landholders who were liable for this tax in 1870, 1809 resided in Multan Division and 1124 in Multan District. Punjab Government, *Report on the Working of the Income Tax Acts, IX of 1869 and XXII of 1869, for the Year 1869-70* (Lahore, 1870), pp. 1, 4-5, 13-14.
  54. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 393.
  55. Major J.B. Hutchinson, Deputy Commissioner of Multan, to Commissioner of Lahore Division, 31 December 1888, NAI, Gol Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue) Proceedings, No. 10(A) of December, 1891. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 386. Punjab Government, *Titled Gentlemen and Chiefs Other than Ruling Chiefs* (Lahore, 1878), pp. 120-21. Deputy Commissioner Hutchinson described Hamid Shah as a hopeless rake.
  56. Report of Mr. Fryer, District Judge of Hazara, Appendix of extracts from Divisional and District reports, *Punjab Civil Justice Administration Report*, 1884, i.
  57. Report of Mr. Fryer, *Ibid.* i. In the neighboring province of Sind, by 1875 the debts of jagirdars and principal zamindars totalled Rs. 2,975,694. In the opinion of the Bombay Government, a grave social revolution would occur unless remedial measures were instituted. Many influential Sindhis would lose their estates to Hindu moneylenders, blame Government, and grow disaffected. E.W. Ravenscroft, Acting Chief Secretary, Bombay Government, to Gol Secretary for Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, 6 May 1857, NAI, Gol Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce (Revenue) Proceedings, 1(A) of June, 1875).
  58. Walter C. Neale, "Land is to Rule," R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History* (Madison, 1969), pp. 6-7, 9-13.
  59. Major-General Reynell G. Taylor, Commissioner of Amritsar Division, to Secretary, Punjab Government, 31 October 1874, NAI, Gol Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue) Proceedings, 31(B) of July 1875.
  60. *Ibid.*, No. 31(B) of July 1875.
  61. Not until 1900, after many years of debate, was the Punjab Land Alienation Act passed to prevent transfers of land to non-agriculturists.

62. *Punjab Revenue Administration Report, 1870-71* (Lahore, 1872), p. 59.
63. Comments by the Lieutenant-Governor, 9 Feb. 1874, *Punjab Revenue Administration Report, 1872-73* (Lahore, 1874), pp. 4-5.
64. *Punjab Revenue Administration Report, 1873-74* (Lahore, 1875), p. 66.
65. Remarks by the Lieutenant-Governor, 7 Dec. 1875, *Ibid.*, p. 5. There were some dissenters from the general mood of complacency. See the quotation from Deputy Commissioner Cordery of Gujranwala at the beginning of this chapter.
66. Officiating Junior Secretary, Punjab Government, to Senior Secretary, Punjab Financial Commissioner, 7 November 1888, NAI, Col Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue) Proceedings, 1(A) of May 1891. The Punjab administration was prodded into action when a civil servant, S.S. Thorburn, wrote a book, *Musalmans and Money-lenders* (1886), ascribing the growth of indebtedness and land transfer to governmental policies and proposing remedies. This volume came to the attention of the Secretary of State for India, who called for a report on its assertions.
67. Major J.B. Hutchinson, Deputy Commissioner of Multan, to Commissioner of Lahore Division, 31 December 1888, *Ibid.*, 10(A) of December 1891.
68. This attitude was to change in the following years. The Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 was motivated primarily by a determination to avert dangerous political fallout from continued alienation and indebtedness; considerations of social justice were distinctly secondary.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### Communal Confrontation at Multan, 1880-1881

"In India, which is inhabited by people of different religions, wherever places of worship of people of two different persuasions by accident adjoin, or are situated near each other, it has been a custom among the followers of those religions not to exceed the old practice, no matter whether that practice relates to buildings or religious ceremonies." — Translation of petition from *Mukhdum* Bahawal Bakhsh to Commissioner of Multan, 29 November 1880, Punjab Home Procds., No. 4(A) of July 1881, p. 482.

By the 1880s communalism was acute in Punjab. The first of a series of violent clashes occurred at Multan City in September 1881.<sup>1</sup> This affray revealed that traditional intermediaries could not be trusted to dampen sectarian strife and that the time was fast approaching when communal disputes could no longer be kept localized. These tendencies presaged major problems for imperial authority.

#### I

During the 1870s and 1880s, several factors contributed to an upsurge in communal tension in Punjab. Hindus were quicker than Muslims to exploit opportunities for advancement created by imperial rule. Hindu moneylenders prospered at the expense of Muslim agriculturists, especially in the western portion of the province. Hindus outstripped Muslims in competition for government jobs, primarily because they led in acquiring the Western education that was a prerequisite for

many positions.<sup>2</sup> The Hindus' economic gains stimulated assertiveness among them. This new militancy received a powerful boost from the presence of a religiously-evenhanded regime, an exhilarating situation for a community which—save for the Sikh era—had been subject to Muslim overlords for many centuries.<sup>3</sup> Hindu self-confidence found expression in religious revivalism, the most dynamic exponent of which was the Arya Samaj. The revivalists' aggressive opposition to cow-slaughter was a perennial source of friction with Muslims.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, economic reverses rendered the Muslims prone to take offense at any threat to the external symbols of their identity.<sup>5</sup>

Faster means of communication (the post, telegraph, and railway), the growth of an indigenous press, and the introduction of novel techniques of agitation (permanent organizations, paid professional preachers, mass meetings, and pamphlets) exacerbated communal discord. Biased newspaper accounts of a remote riot could stir up trouble in places that otherwise would have remained tranquil. In the opinion of Lord Lansdowne (Viceroy, 1884-94), "This rapid dissemination of news and increasing activity of controversy... is in some respect a new feature of Indian life, and is one which is likely to grow and add considerably to the difficulties of administration."<sup>6</sup>

Certain aspects of imperial administration fostered sectarian bickering. The rulers prided themselves on religious impartiality, maintenance of civil peace, and adherence to the rule of law. All these virtues, however, had defects. Under previous regimes, one community usually had dominated the other; therefore, each group had known how far it could go. By contrast, Government's policy of evenhandedness encouraged each side to assert its rights to the utmost without regard for the sensitivities of the other. Owing to the authorities' success in preserving order, people felt free to provoke their neighbors without fear of violent reprisals. In the early "non-regulation" phase of British rule the powers of District Officers had been very broad and lawyers unknown. By the 1880s official powers were closely regulated and many pleaders were on hand to advise people of their rights. A strong trend towards centralization further limited local officials' freedom of action. People got in the habit of challenging the legality of magistrates' orders regulating such abrasive matters as kine-slaughter and religious processions and of appealing over the heads of local authorities to higher levels of the administration.<sup>7</sup>

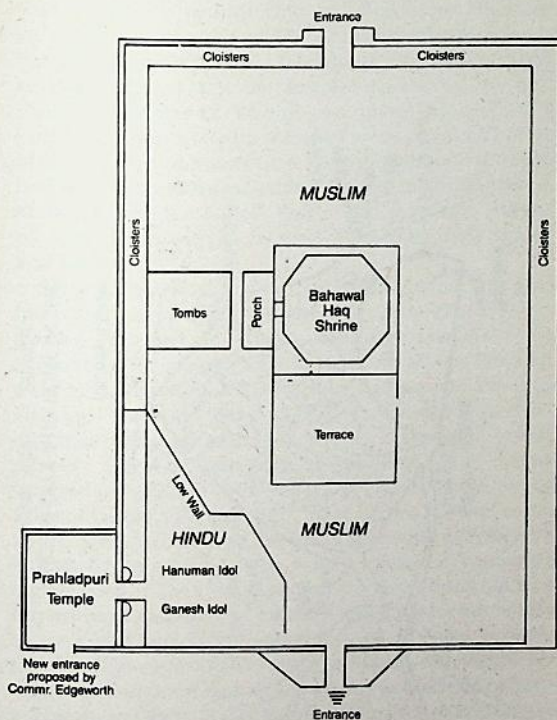


Another potent force worked to undermine communal peace. Under the influence of Western ideas, Punjabi society was evolving from a "traditional" to a "modern" one. Instead of being bound by custom and the consensus of their social group, individuals were increasingly inclined to do what seemed good in their own eyes. In all too many instances they indulged in provocative acts which were unsanctioned by precedent or the sense of their own community.<sup>8</sup>

Communal tension reached a dangerous level at Multan earlier than in other Punjabi cities. The taproot of the embroilment was firmly anchored in an economic subsoil. In the pre-colonial era large land controllers, no matter how inefficient or extravagant, had been assured of keeping their domains so long as they retained political power. As detailed in the preceding chapter, within less than two decades the Muslim landed elites of Multan District lost to Hindu *banias* a sizable portion of what they regarded as their heritage by divine right. This reversal of fortunes was made doubly galling by recollections of the long centuries of unchallenged Muslim dominion in Multan.<sup>9</sup> The Multani Hindus' self-assurance was fueled by economic success and the advent of a religiously neutral regime. By 1880 they were in a mood to start avenging past indignities. The stage was set for a confrontation.

Multan City was the logical arena for communal conflict in Multan District. Hindus were more militant in the town where they constituted more than two-fifths of the population (29,962 out of 68,674 persons in 1881)<sup>10</sup> than in the predominantly Muslim countryside. The small Muslim numerical advantage was more than offset by the presence of a nucleus of Hindu lawyers conversant with English, just the type of men who were prone to take the lead in communal agitation. Of seven pleaders practising at Multan at the beginning of 1882, six were Hindus.<sup>11</sup>

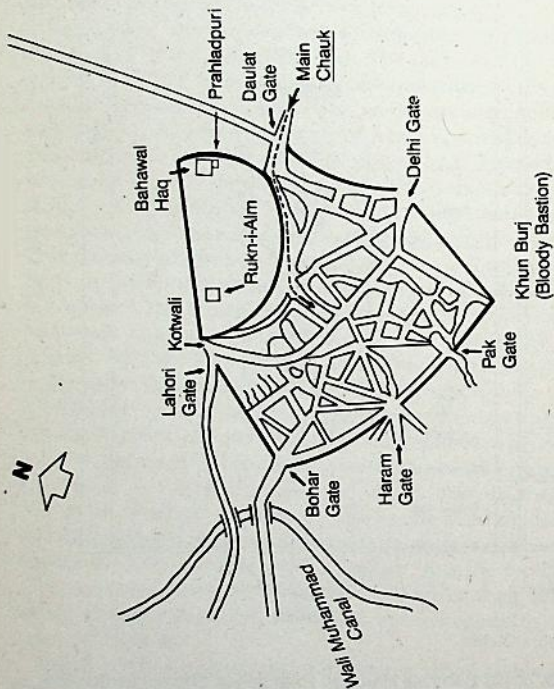
Faced with rising tensions, the administration endeavored to deal equally with both parties. When Honorary Magistrates were introduced at Multan City in 1877, two members of each community were appointed. One Hindu and one Muslim were added in 1879.<sup>12</sup> The twelve non-official seats on the Municipal Committee also were divided equally between Hindus and Muslims.<sup>13</sup>



Scale: 1 inch = 33 feet

Boundaries of the Bahawal Haq and Prahladpuri Shrines During the Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, According to a Plan by Commissioner M.P. Edgeworth (1851).





# **MULTAN CITY AND FORT IN 1881**

Scale: 1 inch = .36 mile

## II

In light of the stresses detailed above, it was hardly surprising that in 1880 Multani Muslims and Hindus were found drawn up in battle array behind traditional talismans of discord, the Bahawal Haq shrine and Prahladpuri temple. The tomb of the revered Sufi *pir* and the temple—sacred to the Man Lion (*Narsingh*) avatar of Vishnu—sat cheek by jowl in Multan Fort.<sup>14</sup> The two shared a common well, physically situated on Muslim soil, and at one time the sole entrance to Prahladpuri had lain through the adjoining shrine. In contrast to the high domed tomb, the temple was a low structure supported by wooden pillars with its entrance flanked by idols of Hamuman and Ganesh.<sup>15</sup>

Since Annexation, and quite probably before, the keepers of tomb and temple had been keenly jealous of one another and primed to resist any innovation that would enhance the prestige of the rival holy place. When *Mukhdum* Shah Mahmud claimed compensation for wartime damages to his shrine (see Chapter Six), the temple *Mahant* followed suit.<sup>16</sup> Reasoning that a return to the *status quo ante* would satisfy both parties, the Commissioner of the day, M.P. Edgeworth, ordered in 1852 that both edifices be restored to their condition under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. To remove a bone of contention, he decreed further that the existing temple entrance through Bahawal Haq's precincts be walled up and a separate one be constructed.<sup>17</sup> The Commissioner's orders could not be carried out without a display of military force. Moreover, troops had to be called out in subsequent years to keep order during Hindu religious festivals. As a concluding "fireworks display" sort of outburst, celebrants were wont to hurl cucumbers about indiscriminately to the irritation of Muslims in the neighboring shrine.<sup>18</sup>

On two subsequent occasions the Prahladpuri guardians endeavored to violate the *status quo*. In 1859 Commissioner G.W. Hamilton was obliged to order demolition of a new structure on the temple roof and to prohibit any further additions. In 1875 the current *Mahant*, Narayan Das, erected a platform near the common well, eliciting a protest from *Mukhdum* Bahawal Bakhsh (who had succeeded his father Shah Mahmud on the *gadi* in 1869). At the urging of the Commis-



sioner, the two religious leaders reached a compromise the following year whereby the platform would remain but no more new construction would be undertaken.<sup>19</sup>

So for the tale of the feuding shrines has recalled no analogy more fraught with sinister promise than one from our modern American milieu. Classic to our "Bible Belt" is the story of two denominational churches occupying opposing corners of a street. While one congregation rent the air with "Shall we gather at the river?," the other loudly intoned a Latin chant translating as "No not one, no not one." In the supercharged communal atmosphere of 1880, however, the next round of one-upmanship between *Mahant* and *Mukhdum* was to escalate far beyond the expectations—and probably the wishes—of its initiators.

### III

Disarray in District administration may well have encouraged Narayan Das to make his next move. In August 1879 Deputy Commissioner R.T.M. Lang<sup>20</sup> incurred the displeasure of Government for the following derelictions: (1) failing to convene a Municipal Committee meeting for over a year; (2) allowing more than two years to pass without filling two vacancies on the Multan City bench of Honorary Magistrates;<sup>21</sup> (3) leaving his Vernacular Office without a Superintendent for more than a year; and (4) being extremely dilatory in answering correspondence. The Punjab Government declared: "Captain Lang has, either from indolence or carelessness, neglected his duties as Deputy Commissioner, in such a way and to such a degree as to lead the Lieutenant-Governor to the conclusion that he is unfit for the charge of a District of such importance as Mooltan, and an early opportunity will be taken to remove him to some less onerous charge".<sup>22</sup> When Lang pleaded for another chance, the administration decided to leave him at Multan to see whether he improved.<sup>23</sup>

The *Mahant* took advantage of a break in administrative continuity to open a new campaign. In June 1880 the Commissioner, J.G. Cordery, and Deputy Commissioner Lang were temporarily away from their posts. Their substitutes, Major E. L. Ommanney and Captain A.S. Roberts, were new to Multan and its feuds. At this juncture Narayan Das approached the

Municipal Committee for permission to add a tower to Prahladpuri. According to the *Mahant*, the projected work was merely a restoration and official approval had been withheld in the past solely because a pinnacle would have interfered with the defense of the fortress by obstructing the field of fire of a battery. The matter came before the Secretary of the Municipal Committee, Extra Assistant Commissioner W.A. Harris. Bahawal Bakhsh's uncle Sheikh Pir Shah, a member of the Works Subcommittee, warned that the case involved religion. Both Pir Shah and *Mukhdum* Bahawal Bakhsh (also a Municipal Committee member) complained that a spire would enable Hindus to spy on respectable Mussalman ladies in the courtyard of the shrine. Harris saw no military objection to the work because the fortress had been dismantled and rejected the appeal to *purdah* as spurious because temple towers generally lacked stairs. As the fort was army property, the case was referred to the military authorities who approved the project on 3 August, 1880.<sup>24</sup>

Considering both Ommanney and Roberts to be unsympathetic, Bahawal Bakhsh kept silent till they left the Division.<sup>25</sup> In November 1880 Deputy Commissioner Lang returned to duty and Lieutenant-Colonel F.M. Birch, a well-wisher of the *Mukhdum*, became Officiating Commissioner. Cornering the local military commander, Colonel F.B. Norman, Bahawal Bakhsh made the Colonel read all the testimonials given by British officers to his father during the siege of Multan (1848-49), then demanded to know "what the Muhammadans had done|that the Hindus should be allowed to build up a temple close to the shrine of Bahawal|Haq."<sup>26</sup> Although the *Mukhdum* harped on the *purdah* issue, Norman deduced that the real reason for his displeasure was that the pinnacle would make the temple equal in height to Bahawal Haq's shrine.<sup>27</sup> On 29th November Bahawal Bakhsh petitioned the Commissioner to remove the spire.<sup>28</sup>

The petition was referred for report to Deputy Commissioner Lang, whom some Hindus accused of pro-Muslim bias. While investigating, he ordered construction halted.<sup>29</sup> In a memorial to Lang, Hindu dignitaries hinted at all-India repercussions: "It would grieve the entire Hindu community not only of Mooltan, but of other towns and cities of India, to hear of such treatment of one of their most sacred temples."<sup>30</sup> On 21st December the Deputy Commissioner reported that the



*Mahant* had acted underhandedly and that if "the spire be now erected without some equivalent compensation . . . the result will be disastrous; for the Hindus will feel that they have gained an advantage over the Muhammadans, and a very sore feeling between the two factions will be the result."<sup>41</sup>

Major Lang recommended that the pinnacle be made 33 feet in height instead of a planned 42 and that the common well be reserved for the exclusive use of the Muslim shrine. Cession of this well would both compensate the *Mukhdum* and remove a fertile source of disputes. According to Lang, both *Mukhdum* and *Mahant* had agreed privately to the proposed compromise but begged off from public assent lest their followers reproach them from giving in. Lang described Narayan Das as insecure in his office and under heavy pressure from his supporters to stand fast.<sup>32</sup> Other sources imply that Bahawal Baksh was also in a weak position.<sup>33</sup> Although the *Mukhdum* eventually agreed to public acceptance, the *Mahant* continued to demur. Lang was confident nonetheless that both leaders would acquiesce in his settlement if it were presented as an official order.<sup>34</sup>

Officiating Commissioner Birch informed Lahore that the Hindus had behaved deceitfully, "though the temptation was very great in view of the extraordinary neglect of the late authorities to refer to the former decisions on the subject, which laid the question at rest."<sup>35</sup> In his opinion, the spire should be knocked down to punish the Hindus.<sup>36</sup> By contrast, Commissioner Cordery (who resumed charge in January 1881) supported Lang's compromise. While acknowledging that the Muslim community was highly exercised, Cordery felt it should pay a price for its tardiness in protesting.<sup>37</sup>

On 28th February the Punjab Government ordered Prahladpuri cut down to its original height. Lieutenant-Governor Sir Robert Egerton observed that Officiating Deputy Commissioner Roberts had been most negligent in failing to refer to the previous correspondence on the subject and should have realized that the "close proximity of two well-known shrines of rival religions would *prima facie*, be likely to lead to animosities."<sup>38</sup>

In view of heavy Muslim indebtedness, Commissioner Cordery again urged compromise. Since the Muslims were amenable to the proposed settlement, it would be politic to allow the guilty party to save face. Razing the pinnacle would "create a rankling sense amongst many of the leading Hindus

which will show itself in forms of retaliation injurious to the welfare of the numerous large Muhammadan land-owners round the city.<sup>39</sup>

Swayed by Cordery's arguments, the administration agreed to give the Hindus one more chance to accept the compromise.<sup>40</sup> At this critical juncture Cordery was transferred to Peshawar. Major Lang became Officiating Commissioner and Charles A. Roe was appointed Deputy Commissioner. When Narayan Das again refused to agree to Lang's terms, the new officeholders determined to impose a settlement. On 14th April Lang and Roe assembled the leaders of both communities at the shrines and gave the Hindus till 1st August to complete the tower to a 33-foot elevation and sink a new well on land to be donated by government.<sup>41</sup>

Lang and Roe treated the controversy as essentially a private quarrel between two religious leaders and responded sharply to what they perceived as meddling by Hindu outsiders. In December 1880 Lang handed back a Hindu petition regarding Prahladpuri with the comment that no suit on the subject was before his court. Both officers warned Hindu notables who took a hand in the dispute that such behavior was displeasing to Government and could well cost them their Municipal Committee and *darbar* seats.<sup>42</sup> During the proceedings at the shrines on 14th April, a Hindu bystander attempted to speak. Lang and Roe had the police remove him from the scene; when the man's father protested he too was hauled away.<sup>43</sup> A Hindu memorial to the Viceroy asserted: "The Hindus were thunderstruck at these unwarrantable proceedings of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner, and their mouths were gagged, which was apparently the object aimed at."<sup>44</sup> When called upon to explain his action, the Deputy Commissioner maintained that the two men had been declaiming on the rights and wrongs of their community generally, not on the case at hand. Such an unseemly interruption of official business—which Roe likened to contempt of court—could not be tolerated.<sup>45</sup>

On the basis of past history, the officials' reasoning was logical. As Lang pointed out, previous tiffs between the guardians of tomb and temple had not dragged in the general public.<sup>46</sup> The ground rules, however, had changed. A few stern words to prominent Hindus would avail little. Far from being prime fomentors of mischief as Lang and Roe supposed, the



Hindu "leaders" were being goaded on by their more militant co-religionists.

The local authorities' attempt to impose a settlement by fiat failed. In June 1881 the Hindus petitioned the Viceroy, Lord Ripon, to overturn the Punjab Government's ruling:

... the temple of Pehladpuri is held by the Hindus of India as an object of great veneration owing to its hallowed associations. . . . On the other hand, Bahawal Haq and his tomb have no connection with Muhammadanism as a religion, which does not encourage tomb-worship. The knowledge that such a personage existed a few centuries ago is confined only to a very limited space on this side of India, and had it not been for the fact that his memory is preserved by those who make their living out of it, the name of Bahawal Haq would have, perhaps, long been forgotten.<sup>47</sup>

Bahawal Bakhsh's opposition to the pinnacle was attributed to "pure jealousy aggravated by the intolerant spirit of Moslem history, a feeling which, your petitioners are assured, the British Government cannot desire to encourage or intensify."<sup>48</sup>

Hoping for a favorable Government of India ruling, the Hindus made no move to comply with the Punjab Government's directive. As no reply had been received from the Viceroy by 1st August, the Lahore authorities extended the deadline. On 17th September 1881 the central government upheld the action of the provincial administration.<sup>49</sup>

#### IV

While the final verdict in the temple case was still hanging fire, an agitation against the sale of beef in Multan City got underway and soon eclipsed the Prahladpuri issue. This new campaign was masterminded by a group of Hindu lawyers. It was calculated to avenge the partial Hindu defeat in the temple dispute and to mobilize mass support, something the spire question had failed to do.<sup>50</sup> After smouldering for several months, the anti-beef movement flared into open violence in late September.

In Punjab the slaughter and sale of beef were governed by regulations promulgated by the Board of Administration in 1849, namely:

- (1) slaughterhouses to be situated outside communities with religiously-mixed populations;
- (2) beef not to be exposed for sale;
- (3) ostentatious parading of beef by Muslims to be severely punished.<sup>51</sup>

At Multan cooked beef, which was indistinguishable from other cooked flesh, was sold at Muslim cook shops. A shambles was located outside the Daulat Gate, whence Muslim butchers regularly carried beef to the cook shops by way of the central bazaar (*chauk*).<sup>52</sup> Prior to 1881, Hindus had never objected to sale of cooked beef and, moreover, had been accustomed to purchase mutton (sheep and goat meat) from Musalman butchers.<sup>53</sup>

On 11th April a butcher exposed raw beef in the principal bazaar, which was lined with Hindu shops. Although he was fined Rs. 5 by Deputy Commissioner Roe, the Hindus raised a storm of protest over all beef importation through the bazaar. Considering them to have a legitimate grievance, Roe directed beef to be brought in by way of the Pak Gate and a Muslim neighborhood. Emboldened by this success, militant Hindus determined to press for the total exclusion of kine flesh from Multan. On 20th April a thirteen-member *panchayat* was elected to direct the drive. Its chairman (*sarpanch*) was an appeal writer and dismissed attorney (*mukhtar*) named Mansa Ram.<sup>54</sup> In an interview with the new Officiating Commissioner, D.G. Barkley, Mansa Ram declared that many Hindus were no longer Hindus as a result of opposing his movement. Barkley concluded that "the leaders of the agitation are trying to put pressure on their co-religionists who disagree with them by denouncing them as no longer Hindus."<sup>55</sup>

Economic and social boycotts constituted conspicuous features of the beef controversy. Hindus shunned Muslim butchers, clothes dyers, fairs, and dances. Claiming that Muslims intended to open beef shops at the Baisakhi spring festival which was customarily attended by people of both faiths (see Chapter Five), the Hindus cancelled the fête. In reprisal Muslims opened their own shops for the sale of necessities and established separate wells.<sup>56</sup> These boycotts were a serious development, for they fractured long-standing economic and social ties. The entrepreneurs in each community who came forward to provide goods and services that traditionally had been supplied by the other community



acquired a vested interest in keeping Hindu-Muslim enmity alive.<sup>57</sup>

The Hindus sought permission to open a slaughterhouse for killing animals by the Hindu method of decapitation (*jhatka*) rather than the Muslim practice of throat slitting (*zubh*). Deputy Commissioner Roe refused sanction in the belief that the request was calculated to annoy the opposite community.<sup>58</sup> In late April the Hindus petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor to prohibit the sale of beef at Multan and authorize the sale of *jhatka* mutton. The sale of cooked beef was said to be contrary to the 1849 regulations. Petitioners offered to prove that cooked beef shops never had existed in the city, without however presenting any such proof. It was asserted that "the shops which have been selected for the sale of beef are on public thoroughfares, and are surrounded on almost all sides by the houses and shops of the Hindus, who will, it is feared, be compelled to leave their houses and shops, as the idea that beef is being sold and cooked under their very nose is so repugnant to the Hindu feelings."<sup>59</sup> If beef was to be allowed, Hindus should be free to start pork shops since:

... the Hindus are very sensitive in the matter of *beef* being sold in open market; whereas the Muhammadans are not so sensitive, as they not only touch pork, but prepare with their own hands, or tolerate those who prepare, a variety of pork dishes.<sup>60</sup>

*Jhatka* mutton shops were a necessity because Muslim butchers had vowed to sell mutton mixed with beef to Hindus; moreover, the latter could not "submit to buy mutton at the hands of the Muhammadan butchers whose hands are weltering in the blood of the kine."<sup>61</sup>

According to the memorial, there was a general Muslim conspiracy against the Hindu community. Muslim sweepers had ceased calling at Hindu residences, thus creating the risk of an epidemic. In addition, Hindu wells had been defiled; a calf's head had been hurled into a Vaishnavite temple; a Hindu merchant had been beaten up by a Muslim *peon* of the Multan *Tahsil* office; and an inflammatory placard had been posted calling upon Muslims to shun food and drink touched by Hindus.<sup>62</sup>

The petitioners claimed that approximately 42,750 of Multan's 57,000 inhabitants were Hindus. To wound the feelings of such a large body of Hindu was not only impolitic but

also a clear violation of the Empress of India's Proclamation guaranteeing equal treatment to Hindus and Muslims alike.<sup>63</sup>

On 21st July 1881 Lieutenant-Governor Egerton rejected the petition: The 1849 regulations did not proscribe the sale of cooked beef in towns and hitherto Multani Hindus had not objected to its sale. The memorialists could not "prove their right to represent Hinduism by the mere assertion that Hindus who have not joined a groundless and factious agitation are outcasts and aliens from their creed."<sup>64</sup> Permission for *jhatka* mutton and pork shops, which normally would have been unobjectionable, was refused on the ground that the intention was plainly to irritate Muslims. Egerton concluded: "The rest of the memorial abounds in misstatements of facts, and the claims asserted are unreasonable and unjust to the rights of the Muhammadan citizens, who number more than half, and not, as alleged, less than a fifth of the whole."<sup>65</sup>

The crisis came to a head in September, helped along by an injudicious ruling by Deputy Commissioner Roe. Prior to the Lieutenant-Governor's decision, Officiating Commissioner Barkley had sanctioned *jhatka* shops in the belief that permission could not legally be withheld. This concession rankled with Roe, whose temper was evidently becoming frayed after months of wrangling with Hindu representatives. On 16th September the Deputy Commissioner responded to a Musalman butchers' petition which sought both permission to open raw beef shops in the city and cancellation of the order limiting beef to the Pak Gate route. While rejecting the first request, Roe granted the second. He declared it would be inequitable to retain the restriction after the Hindus had extorted permission for *jhatka* shops.<sup>66</sup> On 19th September the Hindus closed their shops in protest and their *panchayat* telegraphed the Viceroy that Muslims had paraded beef through the bazaar.<sup>67</sup>

At approximately 7:00 A.M. on 20th September, a butcher bearing beef was attacked in the central market. The Hindu version of events portrayed the man as hawking uncovered cow's flesh at two annas a *ser* till the Hindus could stand no more and went for him.<sup>68</sup> There were two opposing official views of the incident. According to the Deputy Commissioner, the leaders of the agitation desired to wring concessions from the authorities by a show of force. Therefore, they got bad characters (*badmashes*) to waylay the butcher and scatter his cargo in hopes the sight of raw beef would incite Hindu on-



lookers to riot.<sup>69</sup> Officiating Commissioner Barkley, however, judged it probable that "some of the agitators themselves never believed that things would go as far as they did, and relied upon the moral force resulting from great popular movements without considering the difficulty of restraining an excited populace from proceeding to physical force."<sup>70</sup>

Whether planned or spontaneous, the assault on the butcher triggered a tumult. A crowd of infuriated Hindus formed and, almost simultaneously, Muslims poured into the bazaar from side alleys. Each faction sacked and wrecked the other's shops. Owning a majority in the inner city, the Hindus quickly gained the upper hand. Two mosques were set on fire, a *mullah* badly beaten, and several *Korans* burned in the middle of the street.<sup>71</sup> Word of the commotion reached Deputy Commissioner Roe while he was conferring with a conciliation committee of Hindu and Muslim notables at the police station (*kotwali*) outside the Lahori Gate. He immediately despatched all the available police and the Hindu dignitaries, instructing the latter to persuade the crowd to disperse peacefully. Although they did their best, "this best was of little use."<sup>72</sup>

When the Deputy Commissioner reached the scene at approximately 8:30 A.M., fighting had ceased but the market was filled with angry Hindus complaining of having been looted. Lacking sufficient policemen to control the throng, he sent to the cantonment on the outskirts of town for troops. Soon the crowd turned hostile and commenced hurling stones. One struck Roe in the head, prompting him to beat a hasty retreat to the nearby Fort where a company of European troops was posted. A detachment returned with Roe and cleared the bazaar without difficulty. Between 9:00 A.M. and noon, the Muslim majority in the Multan suburbs avenged the Muslim reverse in the center of town. Prahladpuri temple was sacked and set on fire by a mob from the Bahawal Haq compound. A number of smaller shrines outside the Lahori, Bohar, and Delhi Gates also were vandalized.<sup>73</sup>

The disorders subsided upon the approach from the cantonment of a strong British-Indian force of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, which arrived at approximately 12:00 A.M.<sup>74</sup> An 11:00 P.M. to 5:00 A.M. curfew was imposed and gatherings of more than five persons were banned.<sup>75</sup> In the Deputy Commissioner's opinion, "the prompt arrival of the troops alone saved the city from destruction. Had there been delay, the various

quarters would have been in possession of each of the preponderating mob of fanatics, who would at once have fired the religious places of their opponents.<sup>76</sup>

There were no fatalities from the riot. As of 21st September, twenty-three Hindus and eighteen Muslims had been admitted to hospital and all save eight discharged.<sup>77</sup> Property worth Rs. 49,725 was destroyed or stolen. Hindu losses amounted to Rs. 43,986 of the total. Twenty-three Hindu shrines and two mosques were destroyed or damaged.<sup>78</sup>

The Deputy Commissioner's initial impression was that, although Hindus had struck the first blow, both parties had been spoiling for a fight. Bands of Muslim fanatics had seemed to materialize instantly and several temples had burst into flames so suddenly that arson must have been planned in advance. Roe later concluded, however, that the Muslim outbursts had been spontaneous reactions to the *Koran* and mosque burnings.<sup>79</sup>

## V

In the wake of the riot the administration had to tie up a number of loose ends. These items included determination of future beef policy, restoration of order, punishment of the rioters, assignment of official responsibility for the disruption, and settlement of the Prahladpuri dispute.

On 21st September Deputy Commissioner Roe temporarily banned both beef and *jhatka* meat from Multan, in the belief this was essential to head off more violence and perhaps "some tension in the feelings of the native troops."<sup>80</sup> In addition, Roe confidentially recommended making the ban permanent. Religious tolerance could not be enforced without bloodshed, which might "stir up a most inconvenient excitement throughout India."<sup>81</sup> The chief sufferers from the riot had been the bazaar shopkeepers rather than "the crowds which the bye-streets seem to pour forth at a moment's notice." It would require a severe lesson to deter the latter element. However richly deserved, such treatment would cast the rioters as martyrs and the authorities as religious persecutors. While conceding that the proposed measure might be taken as a sign of weakness, Roe disclosed that the leaders of both communities were prepared to petition for it. Thus, the action



could be made to appear a concession by each side to the other rather than surrender by the administration to the mob.<sup>82</sup> Officiating Commissioner Barkley disapproved of his subordinate's proposal because it would surely be "viewed in other places as showing that those who object to the slaughter of kine can gain their ends if they are only violent enough."<sup>83</sup>

On 28th September the Punjab government instructed Barkley to rescind Roe's interdict of the two types of meat. Lieutenant-Governor Egerton insisted that "the position which must be taken up inflexibly is that which from the first has been assumed by the Government of this Province and the Government of India, viz., that the use of beef by those who desire it is not to be prohibited."<sup>84</sup> In the Lieutenant-Governor's view, the abandonment of *jhatka* meat by the Hindus would hardly be a fair *quid pro quo* for the surrender of beef by the Muslims. Use of the first was a recent innovation; use of the second was a long-standing practice.<sup>85</sup> On 14th October 1881 the Deputy Commissioner restricted beef importation to specified routes through Muslim quarters. This measure was approved by the Commissioner and provincial administration.<sup>86</sup>

While the debate on beef policy raged, calm returned to Multan. As long as business remained suspended, a risk existed of fresh outbreaks by the crowds of idlers who congregated in the streets. Resolved to stay closed till beef was outlawed, the Hindu shopkeepers disregarded an order by Roe to reopen. Consequently, on 24th September 45 of the chief holdouts were charged with violating the Indian Penal Code. When most opened for business the following morning, the charges against them were dropped. Three contumacious shopkeepers were fined and two individuals were jailed for attempting to intimidate merchants who had reopened. All shops opened on 26th September. It was then decided that the municipal police force—which had been swelled by reinforcements from other districts to 299 from a pre-riot strength of 152—was adequate to maintain order. Most of the troops were withdrawn on 27th September and the remainder on the 30th.<sup>87</sup> Although many of the extra police were soon sent home, it was considered necessary to augment the city force by 73 members for an indefinite period.<sup>88</sup>

One-hundred and thirty-four persons were convicted of involvement in the disorders; 86 were acquitted; and 251 were

discharged for lack of evidence. Most of the convictions were for simple rioting and theft. Very few convictions could be obtained for the destruction of Hindu shrines, whose custodians persisted in naming prominent Muslims as leaders of the mobs. Popular charges featured *Mukhdum* Bahawal Bakhsh, on horseback, commanding the despoilers of Prahladpuri Temple and Hamid Shah, a member of the influential Gardezi Sayyid family, leading a sally out of the Bohar Gate against shrines along the Wali Muhammad canal.<sup>89</sup> The accused notables had solid alibis and the cases against them collapsed, thereby discrediting most of the charges against smaller fry.<sup>90</sup> The administration felt Multan should be penalized collectively for the failure of its Honorary Magistrates and other leading men to prevent the disturbance. Therefore, the cost of bolstering the municipal police (Rs. 8,500 per annum) was assessed on the citizens.<sup>91</sup>

An official consensus emerged that the Deputy Commissioner's beef order of 16th September had precipitated the outbreak. In Commissioner Barkley's view, this decree had provoked the Hindus to close their shops on the 19th, "a course which was certain to prepare all evil-disposed persons to join in any disturbance which might ensue."<sup>92</sup> Lieutenant-Governor Egerton wrote that Roe had acted without reference to higher authority and without thought of the consequences.<sup>93</sup> Alexander Mackenzie, Officiating Secretary of the Government of India's Home Department, opined the Deputy Commissioner had acted in a fit of temper against the Hindus.<sup>94</sup> On 8 November 1881 the Government of India passed its "grave censure" on Roe.<sup>94</sup>

Roe requested Government to withdraw or at least soften its censure. He contended that he had been plagued by communal bickering for months and that on the whole his efforts had been successful.<sup>96</sup> Roe's solicitation was denied. According to Home Secretary Mackenzie, the Deputy Commissioner was poorly advised in making such an appeal. In view of the serious results of Roe's conduct, he had been treated leniently.<sup>97</sup>

In the chastened popular mood following the riot, the authorities were able to dictate a settlement of the Prahladpuri dispute. On 8 October Deputy Commissioner Roe notified the Hindu leadership that the spire would be razed unless they agreed within a week to limit its height to 33 feet. They



capitulated and were given till 1 January 1882 to finish.<sup>98</sup> Owing to procrastination, the job was not finished on time and the deadline had to be extended again. The pinnacle was finally completed in mid-May 1882. At that time the local authorities reported that all sectarian animosity had subsided. Once again, Hindus were purchasing mutton from Muslim butchers and Muslims patronizing Hindu sweets sellers (*halwais*).<sup>99</sup>

## VI

The catalysts for the Multan confrontation were a festering feud between two dignitaries of opposing faiths and some striking omissions and blunders by officials. The clash however would not have amounted to more than a flash in the pan had it not occurred at a time of swelling communal tensions. Most of the general causes of communal strife operated, to some extent, at Multan. As previously noted, the primary cause of animosity was rapid Hindu economic advancement at the expense of the hitherto dominant Muslim community. Secondary factors included an increasingly militant press, Hindu revivalism, new methods of agitation, waning fear of authority, and a disregard for consensus and tradition.

The *Lahore Tribune*, a paper with Brahmo Samaj leanings,<sup>100</sup> gave offstage backing to Multani Hindus on the temple and beef issues. It blamed the violence on Deputy Commissioner Roe's "extremely culpable obtuseness and lack of foresight" in lifting his previous restrictions on beef importation.<sup>101</sup> Roe was so incensed that he announced plans to sue the *Tribune* for libel. The paper editorialized:

Our mission is to fight boldly, loyally and conscientiously for the interests of our country; and we would sooner cease to exist than lose sight of that mission. With the sympathy and approbation of our educated countrymen on our side, and with the spirit of British justice prevailing in the councils of our Government, we have absolutely nothing to fear."<sup>102</sup>

Government barred Roe from suing in the belief he would be unable to sue as a private person over criticisms of his official acts. Moreover, it would be "most inexpedient to allow the conduct of a Government officer in this case to be submitted to

the judgment of a Civil Court."<sup>103</sup>

One of the *Tribune's* leaders, while ostensibly a friendly warning to the administration, sounded more like a veiled threat. Having ominously recalled the role of greased cart-ridges in 1857, the article continued:

We have lamented the absolute want of public feelings and the sentiment of patriotism among our countrymen, and we know to our deepest sorrow and shame that no political or social cause can unite the Hindoos into one people; but there is a superstition [veneration of cattle] which if played upon by clever men could perhaps unite the whole Hindoo world throughout Northern India even against the British Government.<sup>104</sup>

The *Tribune* defended two Brahmo Samajists who were charged with inciting the riot and made to post Rs. 1,000 security apiece. These individuals had translated anti-beef letters and telegrams into English for submission to the authorities. According to the newspaper, Brahmos would normally favor theistic Islam over idolatrous Hinduism. Therefore, the pair would not have helped the Hindu side unless they believed it had a genuine grievance.<sup>105</sup>

Conscious of the power of the press, Multani Hindus sought to reach a wider audience through it. In a communication of 29 April 1881 to the *Tribune*, one "Fair Play" accused bigoted Muslims, abetted by friendly *huzoors* (officials) of taking every opportunity to annoy and tease the "proverbially tolerant Hindu in manifold ways."<sup>106</sup>

Apart from the activity of the two Brahmos, there was no evidence of involvement by any Hindu revivalist organization. The drive to bar beef totally from a town that was more than one-half Muslim was, however, typical of the new religious militancy among Hindus. Furthermore, the threat to outcaste those who would not cooperate—implicit in Mansa Ram's remark about Hindus ceasing to be such—was to be a very effective weapon of the cow-protection movement in years to come.<sup>107</sup>

In the field of agitation the Hindus were far ahead of their opponents. There was no Muslim *panchayat* to match the body headed by Mansa Ram.<sup>108</sup> During the period April through September 1881, there were fourteen meetings by Hindus to plan strategy and raise funds as against just two by Muslims.<sup>109</sup>

Hindu leaders demonstrated a clear understanding of the



limitations of a bureaucratic administration. Ignoring attempts at intimidation by the local authorities, they appealed to the provincial and central governments. By the time all avenues of appeal were exhausted, the dispute had dragged on for months and excitement had reached a dangerous level.

Hindu activists paid scant heed to consensus, traditional leaders, or precedent. Beef was not a burning issue for Multani Hindus until a relatively small group agitated the issue to drum up mass support. The disdain of modernized Hindus for all traditional leaders emerged vividly from "Fair Play's" account of a conciliation conclave of notables of both communities. He giped, "as is generally the case in meetings composed of old Persian-knowing folks . . . much of the meeting was wasted in irrelevant talk, and they never arrived to any satisfactory conclusion."<sup>110</sup> Mansa Ram and his committee evidently bypassed established leaders. *Mahant* Narayan Das played little part in the movement after April 1881 and only one of the six Hindus on the Municipal Committee—a *Raizada* Tola Ram—took an active role.<sup>111</sup> A Hindu petition contended that, even if cooked beef had been sold in the city since Annexation, that fact did not constitute a precedent. Since beef shops never had been specifically authorized, any sales that might have occurred had been illegal and should be punished retroactively.<sup>112</sup>

Two features of the Multani conflict, though still embryonic, portended serious difficulties for the imperial administration. In the first place, indigenous intermediaries proved unable or unwilling to allay popular unrest. Such "bellwethers" did nothing to earn their keep beyond abstaining from active agitation.<sup>113</sup> The most the Lieutenant-Governor could say in favor of *Mukhdum* Bahawal Bakhsh was that he was placed in a difficult position during the riots but did not encourage disorder.<sup>114</sup> Intermediaries were to split along communal lines with increasing frequency in future crises because the displeasure of their social groups held more terrors than that of Government. The most the regime was likely to do to a notable was to strip him to such honors as an honorary magistracy or *darbar* seat and fine him. By contrast, social and economic ostracism by one's community betokened lifelong consequences.<sup>115</sup> In the second place, Multan's Hindus manifested a nascent consciousness of belonging to the larger Hindu community of India. This feeling, which was fostered by such in-

novations as the press and railway, emboldened them to take a hard line in a District with a large Muslim majority. Multani Hindus asserted in petitions that their co-religionists all across India would take offense at any insult to Prahlapuri temple. While this was questionable at the time, both Deputy Commissioner Roe and Commissioner Barkley agreed that the handling of the beef issue at Multan would have far-reaching repercussions. The trend towards unity, which would eventually spread to the Muslims, foreshadowed a time when conflicts would not remain localized.<sup>116</sup>

The advent of the British Raj on the Multan scene disrupted a balance of political and economic power that had enabled Muslim and Hindu to endure one another for centuries. The divergent world-views of the two peoples determined their idiosyncratic responses to new conditions. The first and passive element, the Muslims, had enjoyed, save for one brief spell, over a thousand years of political supremacy. On this base Muslim landholders (including both religious and secular leaders) had built their life-style and values. Manifestly, they were content with the *status quo*. The second and burgeoning element was the Hindu community, to which Muslims traditionally had resigned banking and commerce. Their "under-dog" role had compelled Hindus to be adaptable and alert to opportunity. When, therefore, imperial rule created conditions conducive to capitalistic enterprise and land acquisition, Hindus pounced on the opening to the detriment of Muslims. A chance to do what came naturally with full government sanction and support was a new and heady experience to the Hindu. A regime without sectarian bias was another welcome innovation to a community that long had been subordinate to rulers of a rival faith. It was inevitable that Hindus would seek to retaliate for centuries of subjection. On the other hand, Muslims, having been taught by history to regard themselves as religiously and socially superior, could not help taking umbrage at the Hindus' new assertiveness. The contrasting outlooks of the two groups were graphically illustrated by their



behavior during the crisis of 1880-81. The Muslims waited, somewhat inertly, for the authorities to come to their rescue; the Hindus, aggressive and organized, went all out to manipulate the administration. The latter recognized that great opportunities for communal politics existed under an impartial regime that set legal limits to its own power.

The third element in the equation, the imperial administration, had the unenviable task of maintaining a balance between rapidly polarizing parties. When British officials of the "Punjab School" inflicted on their domain the mixed bag of faults and virtues of Western enlightenment, they did not foresee that one community would accept it while the other would not. The situation could not be let float because a large segment of the martial and agricultural classes belonged to the unresponsive Muslim community. Consequently, the imperial authorities constantly had to use a "butcher's hand" to balance the scales. Upon their ability—and willingness—to continue this fine tuning would hinge the peace of the Punjab.

## NOTES

1. During the years 1891-93 there were nine Hindu-Muslim riots in Punjab. The communal front was then relatively quiet until the 1920s Punjab Government, *Memorandum Prepared for the Indian Statutory Commission by the Government of Punjab* (Lahore, 1928), I, 111-12.
2. Punjab Government to Government of India Home Department, 21 February 1873, in Government of India, *Correspondence on the Subject of the Education of the Muhammadan Community in British India and Their Employment in the Public Service Generally, from Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Home Department* (Calcutta, 1886), pp. 197-201. P. S. Melville, a Justice of the Punjab Chief Court, was an early advocate of communal quotas in scholarships and government offices. In 1873 he contended that it was "very desirable, as well for the conduct of the administrative machine as on considerations of justice, that a certain proportion of appointments in the Government service should be held by Muhammadans." Enclosure to Punjab Government to GoI Home Department, 21 February 1873, *Ibid.*, p. 212. See also, Punjab Government to GoI Home Department, 19 April 1883, *Ibid.*, pp. 291-304.
3. Lieutenant-Governor Sir Charles Aitchison of Punjab to GoI Home Dept., 22 Feb. 1887, NAI, GoI Home (Police) Procds., 84(A) of Apr. 1887, p. 1.
4. Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, 27 December 1893, NAI, GoI Home (Public) Procds., 210(A) of December 1893, p. 5. Kenneth W. Jones, *The Arya Samaj in the Punjab: A Study of Social Reform and Religious Revivalism, 1877-1902* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, 1966), pp. 1-3, 29-31, 39, 51.

5. When a group sinks in the world, it tends to become obsessed with the outward symbols of its distinctiveness. Thus, it was noted in 1871 that over the preceding forty years Bengali Muslims had "separated themselves from the Hindus in differences of dress, of salutations, and other exterior distinctions, such as they never deemed necessary in the days of their supremacy." W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?* (Lahore, 1968), p. 154.)
6. Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, Calcutta, 27 December 1893, Gol Home (Public) Procds., 210(A) of December 1893, p. 4. See also, "Note by Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab . . . regarding the movement against the slaughter of kine." (Strictly Confidential), Gol Home (Public) Procds., Keep-with to Nos. 103-106(B) of October 1894, pp. 134-35, 164-66.
7. Minutes by members of Viceroy's Council, NAI, Home (Police) Procds., Nos. 84-91(A) of April 1887, p. 4. Punjab Govt., to Gol Home Dept., 7 Feb. 1887, NAI, Home (Police), No. 50(A) of Mar. 1890, p. 6. Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, 27 Dec. 1893, NAI Home (Public), No. 210(A) of Dec. 1893, pp. 1-2.
8. For a penetrating analysis of the consequences of the breakdown of traditional mechanisms of social control see the note on the anti-cow-slaughter movement by Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick (Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab 1892-97). NAI Home (Public), K.W. to Nos. 103-06(B) of Oct. 1894, pp. 169-71.
9. It was perhaps not accidental that the first communal collision of the 1880s occurred at Multan, the Punjabi city that had been longest under Muslim sway. There, Muslim feelings of superiority and accumulated Hindu grievances may well have been the strongest. Interestingly enough, the next riot after the Multan one took place in 1883 at Delhi—another traditional center of Muslim power. Following later Delhi riots in 1886 the Deputy Commissioner stated that Muslim resentment of Hindu economic, educational, and political advances was perhaps greatest at Delhi where "the remains of an old aristocracy and of the dependents of the old Mughal Court, who were ruined by the Mutiny, look with envious eyes on the new-born wealth and pretensions of the Hindus." Deputy Commissioner Smyth to Commissioner Grey, 27 Oct. 1886, NAI Home (Police), No. 86(A) of Apr. 1887, pp. 41-42.
10. *Mooltan Gazetteer, 1883-84*, Statistical Tables, Tables VII and XLIII. The Sikh population was negligible.
11. Punjab Government, *Punjab Civil List, Corrected up to 1st January, 1882*, (Lahore, 1882), pp. 49-50. The pleaders included a Bengali, Mohendro Nath Bannerji.
12. *Punjab Civil List, Corrected up to 1st January, 1880*, p. 106. *Punjab Civil List, Corrected up to 1st April, 1880*, p. 106.
13. IOR, Disturbances at Mooltan, "Punjab Home Procds., No. 1b(A) of October, 1881, p. 803. IOR, "Local Self-Government in the Mooltan District," Punjab Home Procds., 4(A) of March 1883, pp. 104, 106.
14. According to tradition, Hiranyakasipu, the demon king of Multan, had extracted from Brahma a promise that he could not be slain by god, man, or beast during day or night. Feeling secure, the demon proscribed worship of the gods and condemned his son Prahlad who persisted in venerating Vishnu to be bound to a red hot pillar of gold. Vishnu came to



- the rescue in the form of a Man-Lion (his fourth *avatar*). Materializing out of the golden pillar just at sunset, the deity ripped Hiranyakasipu to shreds. Brahma's pledge was not violated since the slayer was not wholly divine, human, or bestial and the time was neither day nor night. A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (New York, 1959), pp. 302-03. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, pp. 276-77.
15. Alexander Burnes, *Travels Into Bokhara*, III, 116. The Prahladpuri edifice appears to have been converted to a temple during Sikh rule from a mosque attached to the Bahawal Haq complex. (This would explain the common well and entrance.) According to some accounts, however, the mosque originally had been erected by a Muslim ruler on the site of an ancient temple of Prahladpuri which he had razed.
  16. Lieutenant-Colonel F. M. Birch, Officiating Commissioner and Superintendent, Mooltan Division, to Secretary to Government, Punjab, 6 January 1881, Punjab Government, Home Proceedings, July 1881, No. 4, p. 481.
  17. GoI to Board of Administration, 16 July 1852, Commissioner Edgeworth to Officiating Deputy Commissioner, Mooltan, 31 August 1852, Punjab Home Proceedings, July 1881, No. 4, p. 481. Permission to commence restoration any was not given until 1852 because the military had previously contended that any construction would interfere with the defense of the fort. In 1852, however, a decision was made to abandon the fort as a military station and establish new cantonments farther from Mooltan.
  18. Lieutenant-Colonel Birch, Officiating Commissioner, Mooltan, to Secretary to Government, Punjab, 6 January 1881, Punjab Home Proceedings, July 1881, No. 4, p. 481. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Part A, p. 277.
  19. "Prahladpuri Temple in the Fort at Mooltan," Punjab Home Procds., 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 481-84, 500-02. A letter printed in the *Lahore Tribune* of 11 June 1881 asserted that the Hindus had been unjustly treated by Colonel Hamilton in 1859. *Lahore Tribune*, 11 June 1881, p. 10.
  20. Richard Tickell Montgomery Lang had arrived in India in 1859 and had joined the Punjab Civil Service in 1862. He had served as Deputy Commissioner of Multan since 1877. Punjab Government, *History of Services of Gazetted Officers Employed in the Punjab, Corrected up to 1st July, 1888* (Lahore, 1888), p. 67.
  21. Lang asserted he had not filled the magistracies because he knew of no fit Hindu and "the nomination of any Muhammadan would cause fresh jealousy and heart-burning." Whether or not this was a valid excuse, it implies the existence of considerable communal ill-feeling.
  22. Punjab Home Procds., No. 20(A) of Aug. 1879, pp. 785-88.
  23. *Ibid.*, No. 2(A) of Oct. 1879, p. 848.
  24. Maj. R. T. M. Lang, DC Multan, to Officiating Commr. Multan Div., 21 Dec. 1880; W. A. Harris, Secretary, Multan Municipal Committee, to DC Multan, 7 July 1880; Capt. A. S. Roberts, Offg. DC Multan, to Commander Multan Brigade, 12 July 1880; Deputy Asst. Quartermaster-General Lahore Division to Commanding Officer, Multan, 13 Aug. 1880; W. A. Harris to Commr., Multan, 20 Jan. 1881; Punjab Home, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 483-86, 489-90.
  25. Maj. Lang to Offg. Commr. Multan, 21 Dec. 1880; Commr. Cordery of

Multan to Punjab Govt., 25 Jan. 1881; Cordery to Punjab Govt., 15 Feb. 1881; Offg. Commr. Ommanney of Derajat Div. to Commr. Multan, 2 Feb. 1881; Punjab Home, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 483, 486, 490-92.

In an earlier dispute over a drain from the well between the tomb and temple Captain Roberts had ruled in favor of the *Mahant*, causing Bahawal Bakhsh to feel humiliated. According to a Hindu account, one night the Muslims had stealthily made a hole in the wall of the temple courtyard and poured through a stream of filth. Lahore *Tribune*, 11 June, 1881, p. 10.

26. Testimonials, honors, and medals were coveted and preserved because they had a certain currency beyond the pride and status with which they vested the recipient. Muslim and Hindu alike regarded them as promissory notes or due bills that, while undefined and unsecured, obligated the giver to importunities of the holder sometimes for several generations.
27. W. A. Harris to Commr. Multan, 20 Jan. 1881; Col. F. B. Norman to Deputy. Asst. Quartermaster Genl. Lahore Division, 4 Jan. 1881; Punjab Home, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 490, 487.
29. Memorial of Hindu Raikes, Chaudries, Muhalladars and Residents of Multan to the Viceroy of India, Lord Ripon, Punjab Home, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 498-99.
30. Petition of 21 Raikes, Chaudris and other representative Hindus to Deputy Commissioner of Multan, 20 Dec. 1880, Punjab Home, 4(A) of July 1881, p. 498.
31. Maj. Lang to Offg. Commr. Multan, 21 Dec. 1880, *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 483-84.
32. *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 483-84. Lang portrayed the *Mahant* as "a man of no force of character, of a very low intelligence, and . . . a mere puppet in the hands of his followers." *Ibid.*, p. 484.
33. Bahawal Bakhsh only recently (February 1880) had patched up a dispute with his uncle Sheikh Pir Shah over division of the revenues from the Bahawal Haq shrine jagirs. Punjab Board of Revenue, File No. 131/1575, p. 17. Lingering coolness between them may well have accounted for the rather diffident way in which Pir Shah protested the temple spire move. Bahawal Bakhsh appears to have been a less forceful individual than his father. The junior *Mukhdum's* testimonials from officials were lukewarm in tone. In 1876 Commissioner A. Brandreth wrote that Bahawal Bakhsh could count himself happy, "if he would only imitate his father and make himself as much respected by his disciples as the late Makhdum." PBOR, File No. 131/1149, p. 7.
34. Maj. Lang to Offg. Commr., Multan, 21 Dec. 1880, Punjab Home, 4(A) of July 1881, 483-84.
35. Officiating Commissioner Birch to Punjab Government, 6 January, 1881, *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, p. 481.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 481-82.
37. Commissioner Cordery to Punjab Government 25 January 1881, *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 486-87. Extra Assistant Harris contended, however, that, "scarcely a Muhammadan, save the *Makhdum's* family and relatives . . . views the matter with any interest. There may be a show of feeling, but the matter is one of utter indifference." (Harris to Commissioner of



- Mooltan, 20 January 1881, *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, p. 490).
38. Punjab Government to Commissioner of Mooltan, 28 February 1881, *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 492-93.
  39. Commissioner Cordery to Punjab Government, 8 March 1881, *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 493-94.
  40. Punjab Government to Commissioner of Mooltan, 14 March 1881, *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, p. 494.
  41. Officiating Commissioner Lang to Punjab Government, 19 April 1881; Deputy Commissioner C.A. Roe to Officiating Commissioner Lang, 14 April 1881; *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 494-95. D.G. Barkley, Officiating Commissioner of Mooltan, to Punjab Government, 30 July 1881, *Ibid.*, No 4(A) August 1881, pp. 595-96.
  42. Memorial of Hindu Raises . . . to Viceroy, *Ibid.*, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 498, 500. Deputy. Commr. Roe to Commr. Multan, 14 Oct. 1881, *Ibid.*, 2(A) of Nov. 1881. Deputy. Commr. Lang of Rawalpindi to Punjab Govt., 8 July 1882, NAL, Gol Home (Public) Procds., 192-94(A) of Aug. 1882.
  43. The two Hindus were released as soon as the official proceedings were concluded.
  44. Memorial of Hindu Raises . . . to Viceroy, Punjab Home, 4(A) of July 1881, pp. 498, 500.
  45. Deputy Commissioner Roe to Commissioner of Mooltan, 14 Oct. 1881, Punjab Home, 2(A) of Nov. 1881, p. 889. In their memorial the Hindus complained of Lang's and Roe's actions which they described as attempts at intimidation. After obtaining both officers' explanations, the Punjab Government concluded they had acted properly in cautioning notables to stay out of the controversy if they wished to retain Government's favor and in silencing the objectors at the shrines. Lang's remark that no case on the subject of a Hindu petition was before him, however, had been a curt and unsatisfactory explanation for rejecting it. Gol Home (Public), 192-94(A) of Aug. 1882.
  46. Deputy Commissioner Lang of Rawalpindi to Punjab Govt., 8 July 1882, Gol Home (Public), 192-94(A) of Aug. 1882. Evidently Lang's dilatory habits, which had gotten him in trouble in Multan, had not amended much: it had taken him over nine months to reply to the Punjab Government's original inquiry of September 1881.
  47. Memorial of Hindu Raises . . . to Viceroy, Punjab Home 4(A) of Aug. 1881, p. 599.
  48. *Ibid.*, p. 502.
  49. Punjab Government to Gol Home Department, 22 August 1881, Punjab Home, 4(A) of August 1881, p. 599. Gol Home Department to Punjab Government, 17 September 1881, *Ibid.*, No 7d (A) of September 1881, p. 765.
  50. D.G. Barkley, Officiating Commissioner of Mooltan, to Punjab Government, 29 April 1881; Charles Roe, Deputy Commissioner of Mooltan, to Commissioner Barkley, 27 April 1881; *ibid.*, 7b(A) of October 1881, pp. 787-89.
  51. Gol Home Dept., to Punjab Govt., 8 Nov. 1881, *Ibid.*, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, p. 982. Interestingly enough these rules had been issued in response to a situation that had arisen at Multan immediately after Annexation. The catalyst had not been Hindu-Muslim friction but rather the wish of the

- military command at Multan to commence slaughtering beef for the European troops, a practice which had been prohibited under a treaty with the Sikh Durbār. IOR, India Secret Proceedings, 1849, Vol. 159, Consultations 16-17a of 26 May 1849.
52. Multan was walled on the eastern, southern and western faces. There were six gates: the Daulat at the north-eastern corner, the Delhi on the east, the Pak and Haram on the south, the Bohar on the south-western corner, and the Lahori at the north-western angle. The entrance to the main bazaar (*chauk*) was situated on the unwallled northern flank, which was shielded by the Fort.
  53. Offg. Commr. Barkley to Punjab Govt, 29 Apr. 1881; Roe to Barkley, 27 Apr. 1881; Punjab Home, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 787-89.
  54. Barkley to Roe, 29 Apr. 1881; Extract from Kotwal's Diary attached to letter of 29 Sept. 1881 from Roe to Barkley; *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 787, 810. Mansa Ram was paid Rs. 100 a month. Being unable to plead in court, a *Mukhtar* ranked below a pleader.
  55. Barkley to Punjab Govt., 29 Apr. 1881, *Ibid.*, p. 787. Mansa Ram named an Extra Assistant Commissioner as one of the recreant Hindus. Most probably this was Extra Assistant Commissioner Rai Hukm Chand. According to a Hindu petition, Hukm Chand delivered an oral order from Major Lang to stop work on the Prahladpuri tower. When asked by the *Mahant* for a written order, the Extra Assistant Commissioner allegedly replied that none was necessary and he would regret it if he disobeyed. (Petition of Hindu Raises . . . to Viceroy, Punjab Home, 4(A) of July 1881, p. 498.) Hukm Chand (born 1820) had entered Government service in 1846 and been promoted to Extra Assistant in 1861. He was the author of an Urdu history of Multan District.
  56. Roe to Barkley, 27 Apr. 1881; Memorial of the Hindu Raises, Chowdris, Mohalladars and Residents of Multan to Lieutenant-Governor Sir Robert Egerton of Punjab; Extracts from Kotwal's Diary enclosed in letter of 29 Sept. 1881 from Roe to Barkley; *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 788, 791, 810, 811.
  57. Kenneth Jones regards the economic and social boycotts following the assassination of the Arya Samaj leader Pandit Lekh Ram in 1897 as a new development. (*Arya Samaj in Punjab*, pp. 221-25.) Such phenomena, however, date back at least to the Multan unrest of 1881.
  58. Barkley to Roe, 23 Apr. 1881; Roe to Barkley, 27 Apr. 1881; Punjab Home, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 788-89.
  59. Memorial of Hindu Raises . . . to Lieutenant-Governor, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 790, 792.
  60. Memorial of Hindu Raises . . . to Lieutenant-Governor *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 791.
  61. *Ibid.*, p. 791.
  62. *Ibid.*, pp. 791-92. The Muslim poster allegedly declared, "hundreds of woes be upon those who eat wet things out of the hands of Hindus (which are equal to filthy urine). . . . And it is a great shame that, while Hindus consider Muhammadans as dogs and neither eat nor drink from their hands, and hate them so much that if they give anything they throw it as if to a dog from a distance, the Muhammadans with both hands outstretched should, like beggars, put it in their mouths."



63. *Ibid.*, p. 792.
64. Reply of the Lieut.-Governor to the memorial, 21 July 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 793.
65. Reply of the Lieut.-Governor, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct., 1881, p. 793.
66. Roe to Punjab Govt., 20 Sept. 1881; Roe to Barkley, 22 Sept. 1881; *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 794-95, 803-04.
67. Telegram from Hindu *panchayat* to Viceroy, 19 Sept. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 794.
68. Editorial, *Lahore Tribune*, 24 Sept. 1881, pp. 7-8. "Mr. Roe's Contradictions Examined," editorial, *Ibid.*, 15 Oct. 1881, p. 4.
69. Roe to Barkley, 24 Sept. 1881; Roe to Barkley, 29 Sept. 1881; Punjab Home, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 801, 807-08. Roe to Barkley, 18 Nov. 1881, *Ibid.*, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, p. 987. Roe's information about this plot was received in confidence from leaders of both communities, none of whom were prepared to testify in open court.
70. Barkley to Punjab Govt., 22 Nov. 1881, *Ibid.*, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, p. 985.
71. Roe to Barkley, 24 Sept. 1881; Roe to Barkley, 29 Sept. 1881; *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 801-02, 808.
72. Roe to Punjab Govt., 20 Sept. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 795.
73. Roe to Punjab Govt., 20 Sept. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 795. Roe to Barkley, 29 Sept. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 808. Prahlapuri apparently suffered no major structural damage, since subsequent correspondence on the spire question made no mention of any such damage.
74. This contingent consisted of four companies of European Infantry, four companies of Punjabi infantry, a squadron of Punjabi cavalry, and a half-battery of artillery.
75. Roe to Punjab Govt., 20 Sept. 1881, Punjab Home., 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 796.
76. Roe to Barkley, 24 Sept. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 802.
77. Telegram from Roe to Punjab Govt., 21 Sept. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 797. Although many of the injured did not report to hospital for fear of being charged with rioting, none were believed to be seriously hurt.
78. *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 787, 802-03. *Ibid.*, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, pp. 987-89.
79. Roe to Barkley, 24 Sept. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, 802. Roe to Barkley, 29 Sept. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 808. Roe to Barkley, 18 Nov. 1881, *Ibid.*, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, p. 987. This conclusion was based on the circumstance that an hour elapsed between the mosque burnings and the first attacks on Hindu shrines on the outskirts of town. According to one Hindu account, the ravaging of Hindu shrines preceded and provoked the assaults on mosques. The Hindus were said to have been enraged by word, "that the Temple of Prahlapuri was burnt down and that their idols suffered the same indignities as they did in the days of Mahmood of Gazzni and other despotic and iconoclast Moslems." (Editorial, *Lahore Tribune*, 1 Oct. 1881, p. 8.) This chronology however is contradicted by the bulk of the evidence.
80. Roe to Barkley, 24 Sept. 1881 (Confidential), *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 798-99.

81. Roe to Barkley, 24 Sept. 1881 (Confidential), *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct., 1881, p. 799.
82. *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 799.
83. Barkley to Punjab Govt., 24 Sept. 1881 (Confidential), *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 798. Deeming it undesirable for any word of Roe's recommendations to leak out, Barkley forwarded the original of the letter embodying them to Lahore and kept no copy.
84. Punjab Govt. to Barkley, 28 Sept. 1881 (Confidential), *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 806.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 805.
86. Punjab Home, 4(A) of Nov. 1881, pp. 900-02.
87. *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 801, 807.
88. Punjab Home (Police) Procds., 1(A) of Jan. 1882, pp. 1-3. A prime reason for the increase was to permit stationing of a party of 55 policemen in the main bazaar as a central reserve. Internal security requirements had been neglected at Multan during the years since the Mutiny. The *kotwali* had been shifted from a central location in the *chauk* to outside the Lahori Gate. Consequently, "on the occasion of a disturbance, the several guards at the gates, reduced by the men on beat to an average of 12 men, hurry in small bodies towards the scene of the disturbance, and are from want of proper combination and handling, swamped by the crowd, and their efforts to quell the disturbance rendered futile." Lt. Col. O. Menzies, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Lahore Circle, to Punjab Inspector-General of Police, 7 Oct. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1(A) of Jan. 1882, p. 2.
89. The Gardezis are descended from Muhammad Yusaf Gardezi, a celebrated *pir* who came to Multan from Gardez, Afghanistan in the Eleventh Century A.D. Muhammad Yusaf's tomb and the family compound are located just inside the Bohar Gate.
90. Punjab Home, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, pp. 808, 985, 987, 989.
91. Punjab Home, (Police), 1(A) of Jan. 1882, pp. 1-2, 4-7.
92. Barkley to Punjab Govt., 26 Sept. 1881, Punjab Home, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 800.
93. Punjab Govt. to Gol Home Dept., 10 Oct. 1881, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 813-14.
94. Minute of 27 Oct. 1881, NAI, Gol Home (Public), Minutes to Nos. 47-51(A) of Nov. 1881, pp. 2-4.
95. Gol Home Dept. to Punjab Govt., 8 Nov. 1881, Punjab Home, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, p. 984.
96. Roe to Commr. Multan, 16 Jan. 1882, Gol Home (Public) Procds., No. 139(A) of Feb. 1882.
97. Gol Home Dept. to Punjab Govt., 21 Feb. 1882 and Gol Minutes to same, *Ibid.*, 140(A) of Feb. 1882.
98. Roe to Commr. Multan, 14 Oct. 1881; Punjab Govt. to Commr. Multan, 4 Nov. 1881; TOL, Punjab Home, 2(A) of Nov. 1881, p. 889.
99. Punjab Home (General), 4(A) of April 1882, pp. 39-42. *Ibid.*, 4(A) of June 1882, pp. 56-59. One final dispute arose in connection with the spire. In late January 1882 *Mukhdum* Bahawal Bakhsh complained that a ten-foot metal spike had been added to the tower while he was absent at a *darbar* in Lahore. The matter was compromised by shortening the vane to five feet.



100. The Brahma Samaj, an eclectic social reform movement, had arisen in Bengal, and in Punjab was dominated by expatriate Bengalis. Jones, *Arya Samaj in Punjab*, pp. 29-30, 37.
101. Editorial, *Tribune*, 24 Sept. 1881, p. 7.
102. "The Threatened Libel Case Against Ourselves," editorial, *Ibid.*, 29 Oct. 1881, p. 7.
103. Punjab Govt. to GoI Home Dept., 19 Dec. 1881, Punjab Home, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, p. 991.
104. Editorial, *Tribune*, 24 Sept. 1881, p. 7.
105. "The Mooltan Riots Again," editorial, *Ibid.*, 1 Oct. 1881, p. 4. It was somewhat surprising that these men did not belong to the more militant Arya Samaj, a chapter of which had been established at Multan in 1878. The Arya Samaj had gotten off to a slow start at Multan owing to strong opposition by orthodox Hindus. Perhaps the older Brahma Samaj (founded 1875) was still the premier reform organization of the city, containing educated Hindus of diverse viewpoints. Jones, *Arya Samaj in Punjab*, pp. 30, 71.
106. *Tribune*, 7 May 1881, p. 10. Following the riot the agitators tried with some success to enlist the support of newspapers elsewhere. Nonetheless, they were unable to keep the agitation going because the violence had caused them to lose influence at Multan itself. Barkley to Punjab Govt., 22 Nov. 1881, Punjab Home, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, p. 985.
107. Note on the Agitation Against Cow Killing, GoI Home (Public), 309-414(A) of Jan. 1894, pp. 114-15.
108. Roe to Barkley, 24 Sept. 1881, Punjab Home, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 802.
109. Extracts from Kotwal's Diary, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, pp. 810-11.
110. *Lahore Tribune*, 20 Aug. 1881, p. 10.
111. Extracts from Kotwal's Diary, Punjab Home, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 810.
112. Memorial of Hindu Raises . . . to Lieutenant-Governor, *Ibid.*, 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 790. By contrast the Muslims based their case squarely upon precedent. (See quotation from *Mukhdum Bahawal Bakhsh's* petition at the beginning of this chapter.)
113. Roe to Barkley, 18 Nov. 1881, *Ibid.*, 3(A) of Dec. 1881, p. 988. Some Hindu officials may have aided their community *sub rosa* at Multan. On 28 September 1881 the Punjab Government requested Barkley to report on allegations that the Superintendent of the Deputy Commissioner's Office and two Railway Department Accountants had been active in the agitation. Any officials found to have participated should be removed from Multan. (*Ibid.* 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 806.) In later disturbances indigenous officials and police often displayed communal bias. See, GoI Home (Police), 86(A) of April 1887; *Ibid.*, 50, 74, 75, 89, 90(A) of Mar 1890.)
114. Testimonial by Sir Robert Egerton, 3 Apr. 1882, PBOR, File No. 131/1149.
115. During a communal dispute at Rohtak in 1889, the Hindu Honorary Magistrates would not tell the Deputy Commissioner anything about what was going on. He commented that "caste-feeling was so strong that no Hindu was willing to give information." Maj. A. Rennuck, Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak, to L.J.H. Grey, Commissioner of Delhi, 26 Nov. 1889. GoI Home (Police), 86(A) of Apr. 1887.
116. Following riots at Delhi in October 1886 the Deputy Commissioner reported that the conflict "undoubtedly produced greater cohesion

among the members of each party. *Sunnis*, *Shias*, and other sects of Muhammadans appear for the time to have forgotten their differences and to be united, and the Hindus have shown the power of their *panchayats* by the success of the *hartal* which was ordered." G. Smyth, Deputy Commissioner, Delhi, to L.J.H. Grey, Commissioner, Delhi, 27 Oct. 1886, Gol Home (Police), 86(A) of Apr. 1887.



## L' Envoi

"Now everything is done in a perfectly different way Everything is tied up with *red tape*, and is done by 'rule, and all the rules are numbered, and men can be machines."—Emma Edwardes, *Memorials of Herbert Edwardes*, I, 58.

If there be any merit in the foregoing pages aside from the recital of historical events, surely it would be in the portrayal of an interaction of two disparate communities with each other and with two imperial systems. The dissimilar philosophies, values, and social outlooks of Multani Muslim and Hindu elites governed their distinctive responses to Sikh and Government of India rule.

Under a long succession of friendly governments Muslim ruling groups inherited a situation where economic rewards proceeded from political power and religious influence. By contrast, Hindu communal influence derived from an economic base and expanded by supplying specie and credit to Muslim elites when the latter's power and influence were on the wane. *Banias* did not breach the land market, historically a Muslim preserve, until the late Mughal era: "As the central power weakened, the government became more and more a government by contract, a moneymaking concern: it got into the hands of Hindus. . . ."

Ironically, it was this same economic orientation of the governments of Sawan Mal and Mulraj that rendered the lot of Muslim elites less traumatic in the power changeover. Because of the great influence of *pirs* with the largely Muslim agriculturists, the saintly families were only tokenly disturbed. Owing to the need to secure Multan Province against the in-

cursions of nomadic pillagers, Pathan warriors found ready employment and considerable influence in the new administration.

So much of a piece was Sikh Multan factionally that at the coming of the Company Raj there was no great enthusiasm among the *pirs* or Pathan military to join the foreign ranks. In point of fact the original consensus was to cast their fortunes with the Sikh forces of Mulraj against the invaders. The final choice was a close thing and, save for the persuasiveness of Hebert Edwardes, the Muslims may not have ended up as special wards of the British.

The British Raj brought to Multan many innovations that were beyond the conception of Hindus or Muslims. A government that was not slanted for or against one of the communities was almost unimaginable. Unheard of was the bureaucratic paternalism that struggled fanatically to maintain a mathematical balance between the two groups lest one party receive one favor more or less than the other. Concomitantly, Western jurisprudence and civil courts made their debut. *Mirabile dictu*, private ownership of land emerged from a hazy dream to a court-supported reality!

It was not this last innovation that led Muslim magnates to borrow from Hindu bankers to maintain the lavish life-style prerequisite to social and political prominence. That process was traditional. What it did provide *banias* was the court supported machinery for foreclosing a distressed property. This indeed was something new. Along with or on the heels of the above, came the spread of the indigenous press, the postal system, and those mind-boggling inventions, the railroad and telegraph.

So the set limit of this book is reached. After a generation of Western rule and a like period of unparalleled general prosperity we leave Muslim and Hindu at greater odds than ever in Multan. Whatever it was that permitted them to coexist for centuries appears to have been forgotten, lost, or perhaps become irrelevant.

Multan was one of those places where sharp social and political stratification came into being and persisted not because of unequal factors in the human equation but because of the accidental nature of history. If, for instance, Multan in its long history had been invaded and conquered by easterners then Muslim-Hindu relations would have taken a different turn. At least, during those periods Hindu numbers would have swel-



led and Hindu power prevailed. As it was, for a thousand years every invader that swept over Multan originated in the west or north-west and served to sustain Muslim predominance. Only after a neutral government provided the opportunity to compete as equals socially and politically did Hindus come into their own. Seen in this light it would have been unprecedented for the Hindu to forgive and forget his centuries of suppression and indignities. Nor could the landed Muslim deny the history indicating that he was the superior being by inheritance, by class, and by religion. He could hardly have been expected to welcome his new role as anachronism. Tensions accumulated until they found an outlet in the violence of 1881. One is struck nonetheless by the tentativeness of the participants in this first religious riot since Annexation. Only one person—a *mullah* — was seriously injured; Muslim gangs caught a number of Hindu shrine keepers but released them little the worse for wear.<sup>2</sup> This forbearance was not to last. Antagonism was to grow until, ultimately, the communities could not continue to live side by side.<sup>3</sup>

Some glimmer of understanding of the communal estrangement may be derived from a review of how two different governments reacted to identical situations. Sawan Mal's reign was remembered as a "golden age" in Multan's history. The reason seems to have been that the Diwan never allowed any individual or group to acquire enough power to become a threat to himself or any other individual or group. Generally people are most contented when they know where they stand and what they can count on, no matter how encompassed their actions and lives may otherwise be. So the regime of Sawan Mal, at least in retrospect, assumed an aura of stability and safety.

It will be recalled that after the completion of the Diwanwah Canal by Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani, Sawan Mal summarily relieved the builder of control of the canal despite earlier promises to the contrary. Quite obviously the Diwan recognized the potential for the enhancement of Mustafa Khan's power beyond what Sawan Mal wanted it to be. About 30 years later, with Multan under British rule, the same Ghulam Mustafa Khan is discovered excavating another canal, the Hajiwah. During its construction the truly remarkable Mustafa Khan died and the canal was taken over and finished

by his son, Ghulam Kadir Khan.

In the course of the excavation of the Hajiwah the Punjab administration began receiving reports of dictatorial and devious conduct by Ghulam Kadir towards the local nomadic tribes. One chieftain filed a suit to no avail. Reports and complaints apparently accumulated for several years until the Second Regular Settlement forced a searching review of the whole question. The truth seems to have been that, while Government wanted to get hold of the canal and to protect the politically-important nomads, no one desired the opprobrium of being against the almost unique instance of Muslim private enterprise. The two-pronged solution eventually adopted was: (1) to grant Ghulam Kadir a 60,000 acre estate but with a proviso empowering the authorities to take over the Hajiwah in the event of mismanagement; and (2) to set bounds to further Khakwani encroachments on nomad territory.

Government's vacillations on both the Hajiwah issue and the Multani temple and beef squabbles stemmed from a common root. The administration was torn between the conflicting dictates of a *laissez-faire* economic philosophy (colloquially rendered as "root, hog, or die") and the need to preserve political stability by shoring up influential or "martial" classes. When these two imperatives collided, the result was frequently an untidy compromise which contained the seeds of future conflict.

The ponderous, by-the-book approach of officialdom to both the Hajiwah matter and the communal quarrels at Multan leaves no doubt that by the early 1880s the bureaucratization of the Punjab was an accomplished fact. The frontier spirit of the Punjab School, whose loss was bemoaned by Emma Edwardes, was no more. It was symptomatic of this transition that close personal ties between British officials and indigenous leaders were considered *passé* by some. In 1874 Major-General Reynell Taylor (one of the last of the pioneer generation still in harness) urged an increase in the allowances of two Multani Pathan chiefs who had been his comrades-in-arms on the Frontier in the early days. The Commissioner of the Derajat dismissed General Taylor's representations as:

founded on sentimental considerations, . . . which are now less appreciated in the circumstances of consolidation and application of general principles to which we



have since attained; the personality of officers becoming year by year less distinguishable under the blending system now in force, which attaches more importance to financial requirements than to considerations such as are here adduced.<sup>1</sup>

The imperial bureaucracy was extremely effective in securing not only order but also a rough equivalence in the distribution of material advantages. This very success, however, caused traditional mechanisms of accommodation to grow rusty from disuse. With passage of time the rival communities would become increasingly dependent on the presence of an alien balance wheel. The prospects of their being able to work out a *modus vivendi* on their own, should this ever become necessary, would grow correspondingly bleaker.

To close on a less somber note, there might be some comfort for the world in the alacrity with which the rank and file of riot-torn Multan slipped back into their old pattern of live and let live. This could indicate that when enough is riding on it peaceful coexistence becomes habit forming like almost everything else.

## NOTES

1. *Multan Gazetteer*, 1923-24, Pt. A, p. 42.
2. Punjab Home Procds., 1b(A) of Oct. 1881, p. 808.
3. Vincent A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, ed. by Percival Spear (3rd, ed., Oxford, 1964), pp. 829-33.
4. Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Munro, Officiating Commissioner of the Derajat, to Punjab Government, 20 April 1875, NAI, GoI Revenue and Agriculture (Revenue Branch) Proceedings, No. 31 (B) of July 1875, pp. 37-38.

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## *Two More Important Books on Punjab*

Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947*.

The Punjab Unionist Party has been ignored by historians inspite of the fact that it not only dominated politics in the region from the 1920s until the eve of the British departure, but also achieved all-India importance under Mian Fazl-i-Husain's leadership. The growth of the Muslim League in this region has also received only cursory examination, although Punjab formed the heartland of a future Pakistan and its population's support was crucial to the success of the League's demand for Pakistan.

This study examines Punjab's history during British rule. This began in 1849 when the British annexed it from the disintegrating Sikh kingdom of Ranjit Singh's successors and ended in 1947 as they quit India and partitioned the Punjab between the states of India and Pakistan. Its findings shed light on developments within this important Indian region, and illuminate the processes of imperial control and nation formation. Little has been written about how the British maintained control of the Punjab which, from the 1880s onwards, formed the major recruiting centre of the Indian Army.

Kamlesh Mohan, *Militant Nationalism in Punjab, 1919-1935*.

This pioneering work presents an integrated account of the growth and development of militant nationalism in the Punjab between two landmarks in the history of Indian nationalist movement. These two landmarks are: the Jallianwala Bagh massacre that gave a new orientation to the nationalist movement not only in Punjab but all over the country and the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh when the freedom movement and the militancy reached its peak.

The book covers the various phases of militant nationalism in the Punjab. It highlights the ideology of the Babbar Akali Jatha, Kirti-Kisan Party, Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Hindustan Socialist Republican Association and the Atashi Chakkar group and their daring deeds. The book also traces the vital links between the militant movement in the Punjab and its counterpart in Bengal, Bombay, U.P. and Delhi.

The Congress policy and Gandhian attitude towards militant nationalism are also analyzed on the basis of revolutionary literature and speeches and writings of Mahatma Gandhi himself.

This well-researched book is bound to be of great relevance not only to students and scholars of regional history but also to those interested in modern Indian history.

**MANOHAR**